

Approved: February 19, 1998.

Garrick R. Shear,

IRS Reports Clearance Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Internal Revenue Service

Proposed Collection; Comment Request for Form 1041-QFT

AGENCY: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Treasury, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). Currently, the IRS is soliciting comments concerning Form 1041-QFT, U.S. Income Tax Return for Qualified Funeral Trusts.

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before April 27, 1998, to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Garrick R. Shear, Internal Revenue Service, room 5571, 1111 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20224.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the form and instruction should be directed to Carol Savage, (202) 622-3945, Internal Revenue Service, room 5571, 1111 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20224.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: U.S. Income Tax Return for Qualified Funeral Trusts.

OMB Number: 1545-1593.

Form Number: Form 1041-QFT.

Abstract: Internal Revenue Code section 685 allows the trustee of a qualified funeral trust to elect to report and pay the tax for the trust. Form 1041-QFT is used for this purpose. The IRS uses the information on the form to determine that the trustee filed the proper return and paid the correct tax.

Current Actions: There are no changes being made to the form at this time.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Affected Public: Businesses or other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 15,000.

Estimated Time Per Respondent: 14 hrs. 34 min.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 218,550.

The following paragraph applies to all of the collections of information covered by this notice:

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a valid OMB control number. Books or records relating to a collection of information must be retained as long as their contents may become material in the administration of any internal revenue law. Generally, tax returns and tax return information are confidential as required by 26 U.S.C. 6103.

Request for Comments

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record. Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and (e) estimates of capital or start-up costs and costs of operation, maintenance, and purchase of services to provide information.

Approved: February 19, 1998.

Garrick R. Shear,

IRS Reports Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 98-4970 Filed 2-25-98; 8:45 am]

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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Multi-Regional Project for International Visitors "Ethics in Government and Business"

ACTION: Notice, request for proposals.

SUMMARY: The Office of International Visitors (IV) of the United States Information Agency's (USIA) Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award. Public and private nonprofit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c)(3)-1 may apply to

develop a Multi-Regional Group of International Visitors traveling in the United States for 24 days. The group will be comprised of from 12 to 30 American Embassy contacts in the fields of government officials, business leaders, politicians, civic and community leaders, journalists and educators.

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 to 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."

Program and project must conform with Agency requirements and guidelines outlined in the Solicitation Package. The U.S. Information Agency projects, programs and assistance award are subject to the availability of funds and sufficient number of participant nominations.

Announcement Title and Number: All communications with USIA concerning this announcement should refer to the above title and reference number E/VP-98-1.

To download a solicitation package via Internet: Information about USIA's IV Program is available via Internet at website: <http://www.usia.gov>. The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from USIA's website at <http://www.usia.gov/education/rfps>.

To receive a solicitation package via FAX on demand: The entire Solicitation Package may be received via the Bureau's "Grants Information Fax on Demand System", which is accessed by calling 202/401-7616. Please request a "Catalog" of available documents and order numbers when first entering the system.

Deadline for Proposals: All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, DC, time on May 19, 1998. Faxed documents will not be accepted, nor will documents postmarked on the proposal due date but received at a later date. It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that proposals are received by the due date which has been established for each available project, as follows:

Title: Ethics in Government and Business.

Type: Multi-Regional (English-Speaking).

Proposal Due Date: May 19, 1998.

Project Dates: August 20–September 10, 1998.

Contact: Susan Lockwood.

Telephone: (202) 619–6889, *FAX:* (202) 205–0792.

Project Goals:

- To enhance knowledge of the structure and function of ethics systems in government and business in the United States.
- To explore how ethical issues impact civil society;
- To explore similarities, contrasts and connections between ethics in government and in the private sector in the U.S.

Participants

This project is intended for government officials, business leaders, politicians, civic and community leaders, journalists and educators.

Summary: For a democratic form of government in a pluralistic society to be effective, citizens must have confidence in its integrity. This program will provide a venue for a diverse group of participants to discuss the meaning and implications of ethical standards and how they are defined, monitored, and enforced. Topics for discussion will include the common ethical values that underlie democratic systems, comparison of administrative structures of ethics programs and the implementation of ethics laws and codes of conduct (e.g., financial disclosure systems, education of employees, methods of enforcement, resolution of conflicts of interest). Through visits with representatives from private industry, participants will explore the link between government and business to discover how this relationship can support democratic values. At a relevant point in the three-week program, the group should be divided into teams to permit more intensive discussions with American colleagues.

The project will open in Washington, DC with an overview of the U.S. political system and economic system. An emphasis will be placed on explaining the principles of separation of powers and accountability of elected officials to the electorate and on the responsibilities of corporate leaders to stockholders and consumers. The role of government and private oversight organizations will be addressed. An appointment with officials of the Federal Election Commission to discuss the issues of election and campaign regulation, including campaign

financing and campaign fund raising will be included. A discussion of ethics law will be arranged, perhaps with an official of the American Bar Association's Center for Professional Responsibility. A session will be organized to address practical techniques for establishing and maintaining ethics systems in democracies. Additionally, the uniquely American concept of "lobbying" will be the focus of one segment of the Washington program. One-half day of the Washington program should be left free for the participants to pursue specific individual interests (which will be ascertained before their arrival in the U.S.).

Participants will travel outside Washington to meet with and observe ethics officials on the state and local levels. Participants will also meet with corporate ethics officials to understand their responsibilities in dealing with government agencies. Topics for discussion will include: the "watchdog" role of the media; citizens' involvement through advocacy organizations; and how businesses promote high ethical conduct among their members and employees.

The itinerary will include a combination of geographically diverse areas of the country as well as communities of varying sizes and ethnic composition. An in-depth orientation tour of each community visited will be arranged at the beginning of each city segment. Opportunities for the participants to attend cultural and social events, met with and address local groups experience local hospitality, will be incorporated throughout the program; these events will relate to the themes of the project to the extent possible.

To receive a solicitation package by mail, contact: The Office of International Visitors, Group Projects Division (E/VP), Room 255, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547 telephone 202/205–3058, fax 202/205–0792. The Solicitation Package contains more detailed information including required application forms, and standard guidelines for preparing proposals, as well as specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget.

On all inquiries and correspondence, please specify the name of the USIA Program Officer as it appears on the "Contact" line of the above project. 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 12 copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/VP–98–1, Project Title: Ethics in Government and Business, Contract Officer: Susan Lockwood, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, 301 4th Street, SW., Room 336, Washington, DC 20547.

Applicants must also submit the "Executive Summary" and "Proposal Narrative" sections of the proposal on a 3.5" diskette, formatted for DOS. This material must be provided in ASCII text (DOS) format with a maximum line length of 65 characters. USIA will transmit these files electronically to USIS posts overseas for their review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get posts' comments for the Agency's grants review process.

Diversity, freedom and democracy guidelines: Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences 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 204–319 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

Programs must maintain a non-partisan character. Programs and awards must conform to all Agency requirements and guidelines and are subject to final review by the USIA Grants Officer, Bureau of Management, Office of Contracts, Grants Division,

(M/KG).

Guidelines

USIA seeks proposals from non-profit organizations for development and implementation of a professional program for USIA-sponsored International Visitors to the U.S. who will participate in a Multi-Regional Group Project (MRP). Participants in the project will be foreign leaders or potential leaders selected by U.S. embassy committees abroad. The group will typically consist of from 12 to 30 foreign visitors in addition to the two to three American escort officers (ELEOs) selected by USIA, who accompany them. The project will be a 24 days in length and will begin in Washington, DC, with an orientation and overview of the issues and a central examination of federal policies regarding these issues. Well-paced project itineraries include programs in four or five communities. Project itineraries will ideally include urban and rural small communities and diverse geographical and cultural regions of the U.S., as appropriate to the project theme. The project should provide opportunities for participants to experience the diversity of American society and culture. Depending on the size and theme of the project, the participants can be divided into smaller sub-groups for simultaneous visits to different communities, with subsequent opportunities to share their experiences with the full group once it is reunited. The project may provide opportunities for the visitors to share a meal or similar experience (home hospitality) in the homes of Americans of diverse occupational, age, gender and ethnic groups. The participants may be provided opportunities to address student, civic and professional groups in relaxed and informal settings. "Shadowing" experiences with American professional colleagues may be proposed. As appropriate, opportunities for site visits and hands-on experiences that are relevant to project themes may be included. Time should also be allowed for participants to reflect on their experiences and share observations with project colleagues. Participants should have opportunities to visit cultural and tourist sites. Arrangements for community visits must be made through affiliates of the National Council for International Visitors (NCIV). (The NCIV is a national network of private citizen organizations located in more than one hundred U.S. communities, which arrange local programs for international visitors.) In cities where there is no such council, the applicant will arrange for coordinator of local programs.

The applicant is expected to have e-mail capability to consult with USIA program officers, and access to internet resources. USIA will provide close coordination and guidance throughout the duration of the award.

Visa Requirements

Program participants will travel on J-1 visas arranged by USIA. The project must comply with J-1 visa regulations.

Please refer to program specific guidelines in the Solicitation Package for further details.

Budget

Organizations are required to submit a comprehensive line-item budget in accordance with the instructions in the Solicitation Package. Cost items must be clearly categorized as administrative costs, group project costs, or program costs. Applicants must use the budget format presented in the "1998 Guidelines for Proposals Submitted to the USIA Office of International Visitors" for all budget submissions. There must be a summary budget as well as a detailed breakdown showing the administrative budget, group project budget and program budget. Proposed staffing and costs associated with staffing must be appropriate to fulfillment of all project requirements, which will include close consultation with the responsible E/VP Program Officer throughout development and implementation of the program. Proposed costs may not exceed the guideline amounts. Combined administrative and indirect costs proposed should be controlled and are subject to negotiation. Cost sharing is encouraged and, if applicable, must be shown in the budget presentation. The Agency anticipates that awards to cover administrative and indirect costs (where applicable) will be less than \$20,400.

Organizations that have received a renewal assistance award from the Agency for the Office of International Visitors must submit a budget showing all administrative costs associated with the project for which application is made. Any award to such an organization pursuant to this announcement may be adjusted to reflect the status of the renewal award. Renewal award recipients must identify individuals or organizations to who they have already paid honoraria in FY 1998 if they propose to pay an additional honorarium for any project included in this announcement.

The Agency welcomes proposals from organizations that have not received USIA grants or assistance awards in the past. Agency requirements stipulate that "Grants awarded to eligible

organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to \$60,000." It is not expected that the project in this announcement will cost \$60,000 or less. It is, therefore, incumbent on organizations to demonstrate four years of successful experience in conducting international exchange programs to be eligible for an assistance award.

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's Geographic Area Offices 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:

1. Quality of the program idea: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to Agency mission, and be responsive to all goals and requirements stated in the RFP, Preliminary Project Summaries and the "1998 Guidelines for Proposals Submitted to the United States Information Agency Office of International Visitors."

2. Program planning: The proposed program and work plan should include a planning and implementation timeline, describe any preliminary planning undertaken, and demonstrate logistical capability to implement the program as described.

3. Ability to achieve project objectives: Objectives should be well designed, reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the project's objectives.

4. Multiplier effect/impact: The proposed project 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 (program venue and project evaluation) and program content (orientation and wrap-up sessions, program meetings, resource materials and follow-up activities).

6. Institutional Capacity: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve effective implementation and fulfillment of the 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 Federal assistance awards, if any. The Agency will consider the past performance of prior USIA award recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants. All applicants must demonstrate a minimum of four years of successful experience in conducting international exchange programs.

8. Cost-effectiveness: The administrative and indirect cost components of the proposal, including salaries, should be kept as low as possible and should not exceed the amount stated above.

9. Cost-sharing: Consideration will be given to proposed cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional contributions.

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 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: February 19, 1998.

Robert Earle,

Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Future of Long-Term Care Advisory Committee, Notice of Charter Renewal

This gives notice under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Public Law 92-463) of October 6, 1972, that the Future of Long-Term Care Advisory Committee has been renewed for a period beginning February 17, 1998, through September 30, 1998.

Dated: February 17, 1998.

By direction of the Acting Secretary.

Heyward Bannister,

Committee Management Officer.

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