

favorably than those with minimal or no cost sharing.

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 the FREEDOM Support Act of 1992.

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: December 31, 1998.

William B. Bader,

Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

[FR Doc. 99-315 Filed 1-6-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

USIA-Bosnia and Herzegovina Undergraduate Development Program

NOTICE: Request for proposals.

SUMMARY: Subject to the availability of funds, the Office of Academic Programs, Academic Exchanges Division, European Branch, of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award. Four-year colleges and universities meeting the provisions

described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may apply to host between two and five Bosnian students in a one-year, non-degree undergraduate program for the academic year 1999-2000.

Organizations with less than four years of experience in hosting international exchange students are not eligible for this competition. Recruitment and selection will be conducted by USIS Sarajevo.

The USIA Bosnia and Herzegovina Undergraduate Development Program is designed to allow Bosnian students an opportunity to obtain knowledge, insight and cultural enrichment through their academic studies at American colleges and universities. The USIA strongly encourages institutions to guide students to courses in American studies, or other courses which emphasize democracy, market economy, and civic society per the intent of the Support for Eastern European Democracy (SEED) Act funding. The USIA is holding an open competition for four-year universities and colleges giving preference to those with the following strengths:

- Demonstrated experience in hosting Bosnian students, partnerships with Bosnian higher education institutions, or expertise and interest in the region;
- Strong international student advising offices with experience dealing with cultural, educational and adjustment issues for foreign students;
- Accessibility to and opportunities for cultural and social activities;
- Diverse, multi-ethnic student populations.

Increase in program expenses together with reduced overall government funding for exchange programs make cost-sharing arrangements with host institutions a critical part of the USIA Bosnia and Herzegovina Undergraduate Development Program. Preference will be given to institutions that can provide cost-sharing toward tuition, fees, room and board expenses and/or other direct participant expenses. Cost-sharing may also be in the form of direct administrative and program costs.

The proposed funding will support one academic year of study in the fields of agriculture, business administration, civic education, criminal justice, economics, education, environmental resource management, journalism/mass communications, political science, and public administration. The academic-year program will be followed by a four-to-twelve week internship in the students' field of specialization. The program will also include culturally enriching activities, including but not limited to community outreach and service projects, a welcome orientation

program at the host institution, a USIA-sponsored mid-year workshop in Washington, DC and a USIA-sponsored end-of-year workshop in Washington, DC.

The funding authority for the USIA Bosnia and Herzegovina Undergraduate Development Program is provided through the Support for Eastern European Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989. The SEED Act targets assistance funds to advance the democratic and economic transition of Central and Eastern Europe. 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.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Overview

The Bosnia and Herzegovina Undergraduate Development Program is a one year education exchange that brings Bosnian students to study at American universities or colleges in specified disciplines pertaining to democracy, market economies, and civil society per the SEED funding initiative.

Guidelines

Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations and the host institutions are responsible for ensuring the students' return to Bosnia. Please refer to program specific guidelines (POGI) in the Solicitation Package for further details.

Proposed Budget

Institutions desiring to host students from Bosnia must submit a comprehensive line item budget based on the specific guidelines listed in the Solicitation Package. Applicants must submit a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as a breakdown reflecting both the administrative budget and the program budget. For further clarification, applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity in order to facilitate USIA decisions on funding. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

Announcement Title And Number: All communications with USIA concerning the RFP should refer to the announcement's title and reference number *E/AEE-99-06*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: The Office of Academic Programs, European Branch, E/AEE, Room 246 U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547, (202) 205-0525, fax (202) 206-7985, E-Mail: sgovatsk@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 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 copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on Friday, March 5, 1999. 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. Grants should begin August 1, 1999.

Please specify USIA Program Officer Ms. Sondra Govatski 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 in the Solicitation Package. The original and nine (9) copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref. :E/AEE-99-06, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 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 its USIA post in Sarajevo for its review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get post's 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 2000 (Y2K) issue is a broad operational and accounting problem that could potentially prohibit organizations from processing information in accordance with Federal management and program specific requirements including data exchange with USIA. The inability to process information in accordance with Federal requirements could result in grantees' being required to return funds that have not been accounted for properly.

USIA therefore requires all organizations use Y2K compliant systems including hardware, software, and firmware. Systems must accurately process data and dates (calculating, comparing and sequencing) both before and after the beginning of the year 2000 and correctly adjust for leap years.

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

Review Process

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

Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel or by other Agency elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of USIA's Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (grants or cooperative agreements) resides with the USIA Grants Officer.

Review Criteria

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. Strength of Academic Program

Proposals should exhibit academic rigor and demonstrated capacity to meet participant needs.

2. Cost Effectiveness

Plans should indicate a high level of cost-sharing and a competitive level of cost per individual student for the USIA.

3. Academic Support

Capacity to assign a faculty advisor and/or other specific campus coordinator to provide academic guidance, logistical support, and assistance in arranging enrichment activities.

4. International Student Support

Experience working with and providing a full range of support services for international students.

5. Internship Support

Ability to facilitate professional affiliations and internships that will strengthen and reinforce what has been learned in the classroom.

6. Ability To Provide Cultural Enrichment and Community Outreach Opportunities

Proposals should demonstrate a commitment to planning, implementing, and supporting the Bosnian students in participating in cultural, social, and community outreach opportunities.

7. Support of Diversity

Proposals should demonstrate the recipient's commitment to promoting awareness and understanding of diversity.

8. Institution's Record/Ability

Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs or a potential to meet this standard. This includes 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.

9. Ability for Institutions To Develop or Enhance Linkages With Bosnian Institutions

Proposals should demonstrate how hosting Bosnian students will further strengthen existing programs/activities/linkages of the applicant institution with Bosnia, and provide a plan for developing or enhancing a relationship with Bosnian institutions.

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."

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Notification

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

Dated: December 27, 1998.

William Bader,

Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Notification

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

Dated: December 23, 1998.

Judith Siegel,

Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

[FR Doc. 99-189 Filed 1-6-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

Sunshine Act Meeting

AGENCY: United States Institute of Peace.

BILLING CODE: BAC 6820-AR.

DATE/TIME: Thursday, January 21, 1999, 9:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

LOCATION: 1200 17th Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20036.

STATUS: Open Session—Portions may be closed pursuant to Subsection (c) of Section 552(b) of Title 5, United States Code, as provided in subsection 1706(h)(3) of the United States Institute of Peace Act, Public Law 98-525.

AGENDA: January 1999 Board Meeting; Approval of Minutes of the Eighty-seventh Meeting (November 19, 1998) of the Board of Directors; Chairman's Report; President's Report; Committee Reports; Review of Unsolicited Grant Applications; Selection of 2000 Essay Contest Topic; Other General Issues.

CONTACT: Dr. Sheryl Brown, Director, Office of Communications, Telephone: (202) 457-1700.

Dated: January 5, 1999.

Charles E. Nelson,

Vice President for Management and Finance, United States Institute of Peace.

[FR Doc. 99-450 Filed 1-5-99; 3:50 p.m.]

BILLING CODE 6820-AR-M