

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Future Leaders Exchange Program Civic Education Workshop; Request for Proposals

Program Title: Civic Education Workshop

Summary: The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Division of the NIS Secondary School Initiative of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, announces an open competition for the Civic Education workshop for the Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Program. Goal of the workshop is to broaden the participants' knowledge and understanding of the democratic concepts that are integral to a civil society and provide them with tools they can take home to aid in the transformation of their countries. Public and private nonprofit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may submit proposals to develop and conduct a one-week workshop in Washington, D.C., in Spring, 1999, on elements of a civil society for 80-100 high school students from the New Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union who are attending school in the United States during academic year 1998/99. Participants will be selected through an essay contest from among a group of 925 students who are participating in the Division's Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) program. The maximum grant award will be \$100,000. Provision of cost sharing to maximize the number of participants will be looked at very favorably.

Program Information: The recipient of the grant is responsible for developing and conducting the Civic Education workshop based on guidelines set forth by the Division. The grantee organization will also be responsible for coordinating travel arrangements for each participant from his/her host community to Washington, D.C., and return, and for providing room and board for students during their time in Washington. The grantee must be amendable to working with USIA and the Department of State in arranging certain briefings and visits, as the opportunity arises.

Overview: The workshop should provide an opportunity for participants to gain a better understanding of the democratic concepts and values that are such an integral part of American society and culture. Concepts such as citizen empowerment, volunteerism, community action, and debate should be included in program components.

The program should also enable participants to learn firsthand about the federal system of government, observe government institutions, hear about and discuss issues on the federal agenda, and interact with government officials. Special attention should be paid to those issues that will be especially significant to people from the former Soviet Union. The program should be arranged for seven days, including arrival and departure.

The grantee organization will be provided with the names of the students who will have been chosen through competing in an essay contest. The essays will have been reviewed by independent, objective selectors.

Guidelines: The workshop should be held in Spring, 1999, preferably in March or April. Proposals must effectively describe the organization's ability to accomplish the following essential components of the program:

1. Provide a Civic Education workshop in Washington, D.C., as described above and, preferably, at the time period indicated. Program components should include sessions on U.S. domestic and foreign policy, the role of the media in the United States, citizen empowerment, volunteerism and community activism, and federalism.
2. Provide training for organization staff on NIS society and culture.
3. Provide housing and meals for the students throughout the program.
4. Arrange travel for students from their U.S. host communities to Washington, D.C., and return in coordination with FLEX placement organizations. (Note: Students will likely be coming from most of the 50 states.) Provide ground transportation for students in the D.C. area, including to and from airports.
5. Provide opportunities to attend cultural events and visit museums and monuments.
6. Coordinate with USIA's Division for the NIS Secondary School Initiative (E/PY) and the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs (CL) in making appropriate arrangements for individual meetings for all workshop participants with their respective members of Congress (either Senator or Representative).
7. Provide staff to assist in case of medical emergencies.
8. Incorporate a program component designed to facilitate students' transition from the D.C. program to their host communities. Include a description of the ways in which students will be encouraged to share what they have learned, both in their U.S. host communities and when they return to their home countries.

9. Provide a mechanism for evaluation of the program in terms of its impact on the students and its success in fulfilling the objectives.

A competitive proposal will incorporate important elements of American culture in sessions that are largely interactive and designed to appeal to high school-age students. The program must be substantive and academic while, at the same time, be paced realistically to meet the needs of young people.

Significant cost sharing is important since it will enable a greater number of students to participate. Therefore, those proposals that show more generous and creative cost sharing will be more favorably viewed.

Please refer to the Program Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) section of the Solicitation Package for greater detail regarding the design of component parts as well as other program information.

Budget guidelines: Organizations must bid on arranging a program for a minimum of 80 students but may increase the number of participants through cost sharing the additional expenses incurred. Proposals that maximize the number of students will be favorably viewed. One grant will be awarded for this activity. It is estimated that the total costs of the Civil Education workshop will average \$1,000 per NIS participant for a one-week program, including domestic travel.

Applicants must submit a comprehensive budget for the entire program. Awards may not exceed \$100,000. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for further details and for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

Announcement title and number: All correspondence with USIA concerning this RFP should reference the above title and number E/P-98-28.

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, telephone (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 Dee 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, D.C. time on Monday, February 5, 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 and 10 copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/PY-98-28, Office of Grants Management, Room 568, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

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 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 the USIA post(s) overseas, where appropriate. 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. Quality of the program idea: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Agency's mission, as well as the objectives of the FLEX program. Program design must reflect an understanding of young people and of

cultural traits that would be specific to this population.

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, guidelines, and timing described above.

3. Ability to achieve program objectives: Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the organization will meet the program's objective and plan.

4. Support of diversity: Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Achievable and relevant features should be cited in selection of speakers, themes, field visits, and resource materials.

5. Institutional capacity: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals.

6. Organization's track record ability: Proposals should demonstrate a record of successful programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all 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. Follow-on activities: Proposals should describe how students will be prepared to transition back to their host communities. There should also be a plan for providing students with tools they can take back to their home countries to implement concepts and ideas they have gained from the workshop.

8. Project evaluation: Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the program's success in achieving the stated objectives. USIA recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use in linking outcomes to original project objectives.

9. Cost-effectiveness: The overhead and administrative components of the proposals, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. Overall per-participant costs will be a factor in the review of the proposal.

10. Cost-sharing: Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions. Organizations that choose to enhance the program by using private funds to increase the number of participants will be viewed more

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.

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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