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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Curriculum Development Project: Secondary School Civic Education for Moldova; Notice: Request for Proposals

SUMMARY: The Advising, Teaching, and Specialized Programs Division of the Office of Academic Programs of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for a Curriculum Development Project: Secondary School Civic Education for Moldova. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501[©] may submit proposals to cooperate with USIA in the administration of a two-year project to support the development and implementation of new curriculum units for tenth through twelfth grade civic education courses in Moldova. The grant awards up to \$300,000 to facilitate the project. The grantee will work with the Independent Society for Education and Human Rights (SIEDO), a Moldovan non-profit organization concerned with training secondary school teachers in civic education issues. SIEDO works closely with the Ministry of Education of Moldova on curriculum and teacher training. The program will comprise three phases: (1) preliminary consultations in Chisinau with a curriculum development team of Moldovan educators; (2) a three-month U.S.-based curriculum development workshop in which the team will produce draft curriculum units; (3) follow-up consultation in Moldova to assist with the training of a larger group of Moldovan practitioners in the review and field-testing of the draft curriculum units. Upon the successful completion of Phases I-III, additional funds may be available to the grantee organization for a fourth phase of activity to cooperate with the Independent Society for Education and Human Rights and the curriculum development team in further reviewing and revising the draft materials and to provide broader training for implementation of the revised curriculum units with the Moldovan teachers and administrators.

USIA solicits detailed proposals from U.S. educational institutions and public

and private non-profit organizations to develop and administer this project. Grantee organizations will consult regularly with USIA and with USIA's office in Moldova (the U.S. Information Service in Chisinau) with regard to participant selection, program implementation, direction, and assessment. Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of the issues confronting education in Moldova as well as expertise in civic education and curriculum development.

The funding authority for the program cited above is provided through the Freedom Support Act. 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.

Program Information

Overview: The goal of the project is to assist the Independent Society for Education and Human Rights (SIEDO) in Chisinau, Moldova, to develop up-to-date curriculum units to be taught at the tenth through twelfth grade levels and to assist in training teachers for the implementation of these units. The rationale for this project is that improving citizenship education at the secondary school level will better prepare Moldovan students to participate actively in building a pluralistic, democratic society, and will promote democratic relations among members of the school community, including students, teachers, school administrators, and parents. Applicants may suggest topics to be developed by the curriculum team in their proposals; however, final determination of appropriate topics will be made by the curriculum development team and SIEDO in cooperation with the grantee organization during the first phase of the project.

Guidelines

Program Planning and Implementation

Grants should begin on or around August 1, 1999, with Phase I of the project, in which a curriculum development team of six practitioners (e.g., classroom teachers, curriculum specialists, and Ministry officials) will be selected by the grantee organization in consultation with the Independent Society for Education and Human Rights (SIEDO) and the U.S. Information Service (USIS) Chisinau. In Phase I, the team will undertake preliminary work in Chisinau over a period of 3-6 months. Members of the curriculum development team, in consultation with a specialist from the grantee

organization, will familiarize themselves with civics curricula and teaching materials used in the U.S. and will select the topics to be explored in the draft curriculum units.

In Phase II, members of the curriculum development team will spend approximately three months in a highly structured U.S.-based workshop sponsored and organized by the U.S. grantee organization, attending focused curriculum seminars, observing relevant aspects of the U.S. educational system, and drafting teacher and student materials for the curriculum units in consultation with U.S. specialists. The grantee organization will be responsible for introducing the Moldovan team to leading U.S. civic educators and to a broad range of relevant resources. The workshop schedule should incorporate time for individual and group work on materials as well as intensive training on specific approaches to the teaching of civics topics. In addition, the workshop should include field experiences which are relevant to the materials being produced (such as visits to schools and professional association meetings).

In Phase III, the curriculum development team will work in Moldova with Moldovan teacher trainers and U.S. specialists from the grantee organization to provide introductory training for a larger group of practitioners in methods for implementing and reviewing the draft curriculum units in the civics classroom.

Visa/Insurance/Tax Requirements

U.S. lecturers and consultants participating in the project must be U.S. citizens. Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations. Please refer to Program Specific Guidelines (POGI) in the Solicitation Package for further information. Administration of the program must be in compliance with reporting and withholding regulations for federal, state, and local taxes as applicable. Recipient organizations should demonstrate tax regulation adherence in the proposal narrative and budget.

Budget Guidelines

Grants awarded to eligible organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to \$60,000.

Applicants must submit a comprehensive budget for the entire program. Awards may not exceed \$300,000. 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. The total administrative costs funded by USIA must be limited and reasonable.

Allowable costs for the program include the following:

(1) Administrative Costs, including salaries and benefits of grantee organization.

(2) Program Costs, including general program costs and program costs for each Moldovan participant in the U.S.-based curriculum development seminar. Also include program costs associated with the field-testing of materials in Moldova and with the initial training of Moldovan teachers.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package (POGI) 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/ASU-99-12.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Office of Academic Programs, Advising, Teaching and Specialized Programs Division, Specialized Programs Branch, E/ASU, Room 349, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547, telephone number 202-619-4568 and fax number 202-401-1433, e-mail address jceriale@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 Jennifer K. Ceriale 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, April 19, 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/ASU-99-12, 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 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 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 complaint 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, relevance to the Agency's mission, and responsiveness to the objectives and guidelines stated in this solicitation. Proposals should demonstrate substantive expertise in civic education.
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 participants, program venue and program 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 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) to ensure ongoing involvement with Moldovan curriculum development projects.

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 technique 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.

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 for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1993 (Freedom Support Act). 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.

Notice

The terms and conditions published in the 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: February 16, 1999.

William B. Bader,

Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

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