

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

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 legislation of the Freedom Support Act.

Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau 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 Bureau 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 Bureau procedures.

Dated: November 1, 2000.

Helena Kane Finn,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 00-28674 Filed 11-8-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710-05-P

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 3462]

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs; NIS Community College Partnerships Program

NOTICE: Request for Proposals.

SUMMARY: The Office of Global Educational Programs of the United States Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award program. Accredited institutions offering the two-year Associate's degree and meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may apply to pursue institutional or departmental objectives in international partnerships with counterpart institutions from Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine or Uzbekistan. The underlying purposes of these partnerships should be: (1) To support through teaching, scholarship, and professional outreach from the partner institutions, the transition of the New Independent States to democratic systems based on market economies; and (2) to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation between the United States and the New Independent States. Eligible fields are education, continuing education or educational administration; the social, political or economic sciences; business/accounting/trade; or journalism/communications.

Program Information

The NIS Community College Partnerships Program is designed to encourage community colleges to share with their educational partners in the NIS their practical experience in designing and implementing programs which provide targeted training in professional fields; provide outreach and services to surrounding communities; and provide education to underserved populations.

In general, underlying the specific objectives of projects funded by this program should be the goal of fostering freedom and democracy through a deepened mutual understanding of fundamental issues and practical applications in the encouragement of civil society, economic growth and prosperity, or the free flow of information. Creative, innovative strategies to address these underlying concerns in the pursuit of clearly defined institutional goals are encouraged. The extension of understanding about these issues through outreach from academic institutions to larger communities of citizens and practitioners is encouraged, particularly by linking educational programs in the NIS to the communities that they serve.

Support from the NIS Community College Partnerships Program is limited to partnerships with institutions in Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. In addition,

the Bureau also supports institutional linkages in higher education with partners from these and other countries in the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union through the NIS College and University Partnerships Program. A Request for Proposals for this project was announced on July 27, 2000 with a deadline of January 19, 2001. Community colleges are among the institutions eligible to apply for that competition. The Bureau supports institutional linkages in higher education with partners worldwide through the College and University Affiliations Program; a Request for Proposals for this project was announced separately on June 19, 2000 and has a deadline of November 13, 2000. Applicants interested in either of these two programs should contact the Bureau's Humphrey Fellowships and Institutional Linkages Branch at (202) 619-5289.

Applicant Objectives

In the NIS Community College Partnerships Program, partner institutions may pursue specific institutional goals with support from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs through exchanges of teachers and administrators for any appropriate combination of teaching, consultation, research, and outreach, for periods ranging from one week (for planning visits) to an academic year.

While the benefits of the project to each of the participating institutions may differ significantly in nature and scope, proposals should outline well-reasoned strategies leading to specific, demonstrable changes at the department or institution in the NIS.

For example, proposals may describe the parameters and possible content of new courses, new research or teaching capacities or methodologies, new or revised curricula or programs, or other changes anticipated as a result of the project. Proposals to pursue a limited number of related thematic objectives at each institution are preferred to proposals addressing a large number of unrelated objectives.

Proposals must focus on curriculum, faculty, and staff development at the NIS partner institution(s) in one or more of the eligible disciplines. Administrative reform at the foreign partner institution should also be a project component. Projects should involve the development of new academic programs or the building and/or restructuring of an existing program or programs, and should promote higher education's role in the transition to market economies and open democratic systems. Whenever feasible, participants

should make their training and personnel resources, as well as the results of their collaborative work, available to the government, NGOs, and business community.

To provide adequate time to meet institutional project objectives, the Program awards grants for periods of approximately three years. The strategy for achieving project goals may include visits in either or both directions, but no single formula is anticipated for the duration, sequence, or number of these visits. However, visits of one semester or more for participants from each of the institutional partners are strongly encouraged. Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations. Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

Although strong budgetary and programmatic emphasis may be given to visits in one direction over another, the benefits of these visits to the sending as well as the receiving sides should be clearly explained in terms of their contributions to the departmental or institutional objectives that the project is designed to achieve. Exchange visits for the purpose of attending conferences are not encouraged except in combination with other grant activities and in support of specific educational objectives at one or more of the participating institutions.

In addition to demonstrating the capacity of each participating institution to contribute to its partner(s), proposals should also explain how this cooperation would enable each of the institutions to address its own needs. Accordingly, applicants are encouraged to describe the needs as well as the capabilities of each participating department as well as the broader social and educational needs which the partner institutions attempt to serve.

Effective proposals will explain the anticipated cooperation in ways that demonstrate that the institutions proposed for participation in the partnership clearly understand one another and are committed to support one another in project implementation. If the proposed partnership would occur within the context of a previous or ongoing project, the proposal should explain how the request for Bureau funding would build upon the pre-existing relationship or complement previous and concurrent projects, which must be listed and described in an appendix with details about the amounts and sources of external support.

Proposals should outline a methodology for project evaluation. The evaluation plan should include an updated assessment of the current status

of each participating department's and institution's needs at the time of program inception; ongoing formative evaluation to allow for prompt corrective action; and, at the conclusion of the project, summative evaluation of the degree to which the project's objectives have been achieved together with observations about the project's influence within the participating institutions and their surrounding communities or societies. The final evaluation should also include recommendations about how to build upon project achievements, both with and without the Bureau's support. Evaluative observations by external consultants with appropriate subject or regional expertise are especially encouraged. Proposal budgets should reflect evaluation plans.

Proposals must be submitted by the U.S. institutional partner and must include a letter of commitment from the foreign partner(s). Faxed letters are acceptable. The letters should be signed by persons authorized to commit institutional resources to the project. U.S. and foreign partner institutions are encouraged to consult about the proposed project with program office staff in Washington, DC.

Costs

The Bureau's support may be used to defray the costs of the exchange visits as well as the costs of their administration at any partner institution up to a maximum of 20 percent of the total grant, including administrative salaries. All indirect costs are unallowable. However, substantiated indirect costs may be included as part of an institution's cost-sharing. Although grants under this program will be issued to eligible U.S. community colleges, adequate provision for the administrative costs of the project at all partner institutions is encouraged. Administrative salary support may be included for project directors and administrative assistants within the 20 percent maximum that may be allocated to administrative costs. (See the section of the POGI on allowable costs.) Students may participate in the project, but not with the Bureau's support for the costs of their visits.

The proposal may include a request for funding to reinforce the activities of exchange participants through the establishment and maintenance of Internet and/or electronic mail communication facilities as well as through interactive technology or non-technology-based distance-learning programs. However, projects focusing primarily on technology or physical infrastructure development are not

encouraged. Proposals that include Internet, electronic mail, and other interactive technologies should discuss how the foreign partner institution would support the costs of such technologies after the project ends. Applicants may propose other project activities not specifically anticipated in this solicitation if the activities reinforce exchange activities and their impact.

The commitment of all partner institutions to the proposed project should be reflected in the cost-sharing which they offer in the context of their respective institutional capacities. Although the contributions offered by U.S. and foreign institutions with relatively few resources may be less than those offered by other applicants, all participating institutions are expected to identify substantial costs to contribute. These costs may include the estimated costs of in-kind contributions for which funds are not exchanged. Consistent with the "Review Criteria" for this competition listed elsewhere in this document, proposed cost-sharing will be considered an important indicator of each participating institution's interest in the project and of the institution's potential to benefit from it.

The maximum award in the FY 2001 competition will be \$200,000. Requests for amounts smaller than the maximum are eligible. Budgets and budget notes should carefully justify the amounts requested. Grants awarded to organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to \$60,000. Grants are subject to the availability of funds for Fiscal Year 2001.

Projects must conform with the Bureau's requirements and guidelines outlined in the solicitation package for this RFP, which can be obtained by following the instructions given in the section below entitled "For Further Information". The Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (hereafter, POGI) and the Proposal Submission Instructions (hereafter, PSI), which contain additional guidelines, are included in the Solicitation Package. Proposals that do not follow RFP requirements and the guidelines appearing in the POGI and PSI may be excluded from consideration due to technical ineligibility.

Eligible Fields

The NIS Community College Partnerships Program is limited to the following academic fields:

- (1) business/accounting/trade;
- (2) education/continuing education/educational administration;

- (3) journalism/communications; and
 (4) social, political, or economic sciences.

U.S. Institution and Participant Eligibility

In the United States, participation in the program is open to accredited institutions offering the two-year Associate's degree. Applications from consortia and other combinations of cooperating institutions are eligible. Secondary U.S. partners may include relevant non-governmental organizations, non-profit service or professional organizations, or other institutions of higher education. If the lead U.S. institution is responsible for submitting an application on behalf of a consortium, the application must document the lead institution's authority to represent the consortium. With the exception of outside evaluators on contract with the U.S. institution, participants representing the U.S. institution(s) who are traveling under Bureau grant funds must be faculty or staff from the participating institution(s) and must be U.S. citizens.

Foreign Institution and Participant Eligibility

In other countries, participation is open to recognized institutions of post-secondary education, including pedagogical institutes and universities, technical institutes and universities, and vocational training schools. Secondary foreign partners may include relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations, non-profit service or professional organizations. Participants representing the foreign institutions must be faculty or staff of the primary or secondary partner institution, and be citizens, nationals, or permanent residents of the country of the foreign partner, and be qualified to hold a valid passport and U.S. J-1 visa.

Foreign Country and Location Eligibility

Foreign partners from the following countries are eligible:

- Georgia;
- Kazakhstan;
- Moldova;

Russia—Preference will be given to proposals that designate a partner institution outside Moscow and St. Petersburg. Proposals that designate a partner institution in the Russian Far East, Tomsk, or Samara region are encouraged.

Ukraine—Preference will be given to proposals that designate a partner institution outside Kyiv.

Uzbekistan.

Ineligibility

A proposal may be deemed technically ineligible if:

- (1) It does not fully adhere to the guidelines established herein and in the Solicitation Package;
- (2) It is not received by the deadline;
- (3) It is not submitted by the U.S. partner;
- (4) One of the partner institutions is ineligible;
- (5) The academic discipline(s) is/are not listed as eligible in the RFP, herein;
- (6) The amount requested of the Bureau exceeds \$200,000 for the three-year project.

Please refer to program-specific guidelines (POGI) in the Solicitation Package for further details.

Grant-Making 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 cited above is provided through the Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992 (FREEDOM Support Act).

Announcement Title and Number

All communications with the Bureau concerning this RFP should refer to the NIS Community College Partnerships Program and reference number ECA/A/S/U-01-10.

Deadline for Proposals

All copies must be received at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs by 5 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on Friday, February 23, 2001. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time, nor will documents postmarked on Friday, February 23, 2001 but received on a later date. It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure compliance with the deadline.

Approximate program dates: Grants should begin on or about August 15, 2001.

Duration: Approximately August 15, 2001–August 14, 2004.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Please contact the United States Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Office of Global Educational Programs, Humphrey Fellowships and Institutional Linkages Branch, State Annex 44 (ECA/A/S/U) room 349, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547, fax: (202) 401-1433 to request a Solicitation Package containing more detailed award criteria; all application forms; and guidelines for preparing proposals, including specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget. Please specify Bureau Program Officer Jonathan Cebra (telephone: 202-619-4126, email: jcebra@pd.state.gov) on all inquiries and correspondence regarding partnerships with institutions in Moldova or Ukraine; please indicate Bureau Program Officer Michelle Johnson (telephone: 202-619-4097, email: johnsonmi@pd.state.gov) on all inquiries and correspondence regarding partnerships with institutions in Russia; please indicate Bureau Program Officer Alanna Bailey (telephone: 202-619-6492, email: abailey@pd.state.gov) on all inquiries and correspondence regarding institutions in any other eligible country.

To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at: <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/rfps>. Please read all information before downloading.

Interested applicants should read the complete **Federal Register** announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFP deadline has passed, Bureau 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 10 copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Cultural and Educational Affairs, Ref.: ECA/A/S/U-01-10, Program Management Staff, ECA/EX/PM, Room 534, 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) format with a maximum line length of 65 characters. The Bureau will transmit these files electronically to

public affairs sections at U.S. embassies overseas for their review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get posts' comments for the Bureau'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," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106-113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

Review Process

The Bureau 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 evaluated by independent external reviewers.

The independent external reviewers, who will be professional, scholarly, or educational experts with appropriate regional and thematic knowledge, will provide recommendations and assessments for consideration by the Bureau. The Bureau will consider for funding only those proposals that are recommended for further consideration by the independent external reviewers.

Proposals will also be reviewed by Department staff as well as by the officers of the Office of the Coordinator of United States Assistance to the New Independent States and the public

diplomacy sections of U.S. Embassies. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Advisor or by other offices of the U.S. Department of State. Funding decisions will be made at the discretion of the Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (grants or cooperative agreements) resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

Review Criteria

All reviewers will use the criteria below to reach funding recommendations and decisions. Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to these criteria, which are not rank-ordered or weighted.

(1) **Broad Significance of Institutional Objectives:** Project objectives should have significant but realistically anticipated ongoing consequences for the participating institutions that will also contribute to the transition of the New Independent States to market economies and democratic societies.

(2) **Clarity and Relevance of Project Objectives to Institutional Needs:** Proposed projects should outline clearly formulated objectives that relate specifically to the needs of the participating institutions.

(3) **Creativity and Feasibility of Project Implementation:** Plan to achieve project objectives should demonstrate the feasibility of doing so during a three-year period by utilizing and reinforcing exchange activities realistically and with creativity.

(4) **Institutional Commitment to Cooperation:** Proposals should demonstrate significant understanding at each institution of its own needs and capacities and of the needs and capacities of its proposed partner(s), together with a strong commitment, during and after the period of grant activity, to cooperate with one another in the mutual pursuit of institutional objectives.

(5) **Project Evaluation:** Proposals should outline a methodology for determining the degree to which a project meets its objectives, both while the project is underway and at its conclusion. The final project evaluation should include an external component and should provide observations about the project's influence within the participating institutions as well as their surrounding communities or societies.

(6) **Cost-effectiveness:** Administrative and program costs should be reasonable and appropriate with cost-sharing provided by all participating institutions within the context of their respective capacities and as a reflection

of their commitment to cooperate with one another in pursuing project objectives. Although indirect costs are eligible for inclusion among costs to be contributed by the applicant, contributions should not be limited to indirect costs.

(7) **Support of Diversity:** Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity by explaining how issues of diversity relate to project objectives for all institutional partners and how these issues will be addressed during project implementation. Proposals should also outline the institutional profile of each participating institution with regard to issues of diversity.

Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau 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 Bureau 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 Bureau procedures.

Dated: November 1, 2000.

Helena Kane Finn,

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

[FR Doc. 00-28673 Filed 11-8-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710-11-U

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Coast Guard

[USCG 2000-8229]

Deepwater Capability Replacement Project: Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent and request for public comments; public meeting notice.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard announces its intent to prepare a draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for the development of