

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 3463]

Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Computer Training of Trainers Workshop; Request for Proposals

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 Computer Training of Trainers Workshop for the Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) program. The FLEX program brings secondary students from the New Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union to the U.S. for an academic year. During their time in the U.S., FLEX students live with American host families and attend U.S. high schools.

The primary goal of the Computer Training of Trainers Workshop is to train the participants to educate others in basic computer skills and Internet access. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may submit proposals to conduct a one-week workshop in Spring, 2001 to train a minimum of 25 FLEX students. Participants will be selected from among a group of 1155 students. The maximum grant award will be \$60,000. 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 Computer Training of Trainers Workshop based on guidelines set forth by the Division. The grantee organization will also have responsibility for selecting participants in cooperation with their respective placement organizations. Additional responsibilities include coordinating travel arrangements for each participant from his/her host community to the training site and return, and for providing room and board for students during their time at the workshop.

Overview

Workshop participants should be selected according to computer ability and interest as well as motivation to help citizens of their countries. The workshop should provide an opportunity for participants to improve their computer expertise and learn about teaching methodology that will empower them to instruct others. Participants will be provided with tools

that will enable them to teach basic computer skills. Participants should also gain awareness of how computers can enhance societal development through communication with appropriate organizations, distance learning projects, local language web sites, etc. Particular 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.

Selection of workshop participants will be completed by the recipient of the grant in collaboration with placement organizations. Currently, there are 16 organizations that are responsible for placing FLEX students in American homes and schools throughout the U.S. They are also responsible for the students' well-being during their stay in the U.S. For a complete list of these organizations, please refer to the Youth Programs Division web site: <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/citizens/students>.

Guidelines

The workshop should be held in Spring, 2001, 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 Computer Training of Trainers Workshop, as described above and, preferably, at the time period indicated.
2. Include a description of the student selection process.
3. Provide training for organization staff on NIS society and culture.
4. Provide housing and meals for the students throughout the program.
5. Arrange travel for students from their U.S. host communities to the training site, and return, in coordination with FLEX placement organizations. (Note: Students will likely be coming from as many as 25 states.) Provide ground transportation for students in the training area, including to and from airports.
6. Provide opportunities to attend cultural events in the area.
7. Provide staff to assist in case of medical emergencies.
8. Incorporate a program component designed to facilitate students' transition from the computer workshop to their host communities.
9. 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.
10. Provide a mechanism in which participants can continue to

communicate with each other upon completion of the workshop.

11. Provide tools 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/NIS 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. A strong proposal will reflect a clear, convincing agenda outlining exactly how the program will be carried out and how outcomes will be accomplished as a result of the grant. Knowledge of the current technological capacity (Internet connectivity, e-mail, hardware and software) of NIS countries is essential.

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 submit proposals that arrange a program for a minimum of 25 students, but may increase the number of participants through cost sharing. 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 Computer Training of Trainers Workshop will average \$2,400 per NIS participant for a one-week program, including U.S. domestic travel.

Applicants must submit a comprehensive budget for the entire program. Awards may not exceed \$60,000. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for further details and for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- (1) Transportation for participants from their host U.S. cities/towns to workshop site
- (2) Daily travel to/from workshop site location
- (3) Room and board during the time of the workshop
- (4) Rental of facilities and equipment

- (5) Fees for related activities/excursions
- (6) Honoraria for speakers/trainers, as appropriate
- (7) Supplies
- (8) Security services

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

Announcement Title and Number

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFP should reference the above title and number *ECA/PE/C/PY-01-20*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Youth Programs Division, Office of Citizen Exchanges, ECA/PE/C/PY, Room 568, U.S. Department of State, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547, phone: 202/619-6299, fax: 202/619-5311, e-mail: <amussman@pd.state.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 Bureau Program Officer Anna Mussman 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, Bureau 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 the Bureau's website at <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/rfps>. Please read all information before downloading.

Deadline for Proposals

All proposal copies must be received at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs by 5 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on December 22, 2000. 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 seven copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Department of State, SA-44, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Ref.: ECA/PE/C/PY-01-20, Program Management, ECA/EX/PM, Room 534, 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," 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 reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of Bureau officers for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's 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

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 Bureau's mission.
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 organization will meet the program's objectives 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 both program administration.
5. *Institutional Capacity:* Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. Proposing organization should demonstrate it has experience with computer education, preferably with youth, as well as familiarity with the culture of the New Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union.
6. *Track Record:* Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau grants as determined by Bureau Grant Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
7. *Multiplier effect/impact:* Proposed programs should describe how workshop participants will be motivated and enabled to reach out to other individuals in their home countries.
8. *Follow-on Activities:* Proposals should describe how workshop participants will be provided with knowledge and tools that will prepare them to share information and ideas after their return to their home countries.
9. *Project Evaluation:* Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success. 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 a final report after the project has been completed.
10. *Cost-effectiveness/Cost Sharing:* 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. 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.

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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