

Dated: December 6, 2000.

Allan I. Hoberman,

Acting Associate Administrator for Disaster Assistance.

[FR Doc. 00-31787 Filed 12-13-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8025-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 3506]

Bureau of Consular Affairs; Designation of Certain Posts for Special Fee Payment Procedures

This public notice identifies the initial ten posts designated by the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Visa Services for two purposes related to the payment of immigrant visa fees. The first purpose relates to the revised procedure for payment of the fee for the processing of an application for an immigrant visa set forth in the **Federal Register** on September 8, 2000, (65 FR 54598). That regulation is being stayed in a public notice today until a new effective date of January 1, 2001.

The second purpose is to identify the posts for which a fee pursuant to Item 61 of the Schedule of Fees for Consular Services (22 CFR 22.1) will be assessed for advance review of and assistance with the Affidavit of Support that is required in certain immigrant visa cases. Notice of this fee requirement is being added to the visa regulation pertaining to the Affidavit of Support requirement in 22 CFR 40.41(b), being published today with an effective date of January 1, 2001.

The Department will publish further public notices as additional designations are made, until such time as both procedures have been made applicable worldwide.

The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Visa Services hereby designates the Foreign Service posts in the following cities: for participation in the initial stage of the new immigrant visa application processing fee payment system and the fee for review of and assistance with the Affidavit of Support required under section 213A of the Immigration and Nationality Act

Bogota, Colombia
Ciudad Juarez, Mexico
Freetown, Sierra Leone
Georgetown, Guyana
Guangzhou, China
Manila, Philippines
Montreal, Canada
Port au Prince, Haiti
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Tirana, Albania.

Dated: November 28, 2000.

George C. Lannon,

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Visa Services.

[FR Doc. 00-31743 Filed 12-13-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710-06-P

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 3507]

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Request for Grant Proposals: NIS Secondary School Partnership Program

SUMMARY: The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division, of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for the NIS Secondary School Partnership Program. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may submit proposals to either enhance or expand existing partnerships or develop new school partnership programs with Russia or Ukraine. All proposals must have a thematic focus and feature on-going joint project activity between the schools, a student exchange component, and an educator (teacher/administrator) exchange component. The maximum grant award will be \$150,000.

Program Information: The Secondary School Partnership Program is funded under the Freedom Support Act to assist young people in building an open society and developing democratic processes and institutions in the New Independent States (NIS). This program provides grants to link schools in the three countries noted above with schools in the United States. The U.S. recipient of the grant is responsible for recruiting, selecting, and organizing a U.S. network of a minimum of two secondary schools; strengthening an existing working relationship with an organization or agency of government in the NIS responsible for a network of at least two schools there; and linking the two networks in one-to-one school partnerships through thematic projects and substantive exchange activities.

Overview: The short-term goal of the school partnership program is to provide partial funding for linkages between U.S. and NIS schools featuring collaborative substantive projects and reciprocal student and educator exchanges with strong academic content. The long-term goals are to: (1) Develop lasting, sustainable institutional ties between U.S. and NIS schools and communities; (2) support democracy and educational reform in the NIS; (3) advance mutual understanding between the youth and

teachers of the U.S. and the NIS; and (4) promote partnerships developed through governmental, educational, and not-for-profit sector cooperation that serve the needs and interests of the schools.

The program has several defining features to help the participating schools develop their partnership:

- Each partnership has a project theme and the students and teachers in the two paired schools work on a joint project throughout the school year related to this theme;
- The two schools develop a relationship over the course of an academic year, through the planning process and the work on their joint project, which is highlighted by exchanges from three weeks to ten months in duration. Exchanges take place while the host school is in session.
- The student and teacher exchanges must be reciprocal.
- The program includes educators (teachers and/or administrators) in order to involve them in all aspects of the partnership and to provide them access to resources for curriculum development and educational training.
- During the exchange, participants attend class, are involved in school-based activities, work on their joint project, perform community service, visit educational and cultural sites, and reside with host families.

DATES: Grants may begin on or about July 15, 2001, and cover the 2001-2002 academic year. The exact starting date of the grant will be dependent on availability of funds.

Guidelines: A competitive proposal will present a project that builds upon previous contacts and interaction between the proposed schools to help ensure a solid foundation for the partnership. Partnerships should have an existence beyond the scope of this initiative; that is, there should be an inherent reason for the linkage apart from the availability of grant funds. Organizers and school networks in the U.S. and NIS should collaborate in planning and preparation. Applicants must have an NIS organizational partner that has its base of operation in the partner country and not in another country. Proposals should support a working relationship that will produce something tangible and lasting in addressing the interests of both sides, beyond the confines of the funded project, such as the development of educational materials. The proposal should specify measurable goals and objectives of the program.

In general, the Bureau seeks school partnerships that target under-served countries or regions. For programs with Russia and Ukraine, priority will be given to partnerships with schools located outside of the Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Kiev regions. The Bureau particularly welcomes proposals that feature schools in the Russian Far East (east of Lake Baikal), western Siberia (e.g., Altay Kray, Gorniy Altay Republic, Kemerovo and Tyumen oblasts), Central Russia (e.g., Orel, Lipetsk, Tambov, Kursk oblasts), and Novgorod, Samara, and Tomsk.

Proposals must clearly describe and define substantive thematically-based projects for each school partnership that are the focus of the exchange for both students and educators and on-going joint project activity between the two schools. Specific activities, products, curriculum materials, and pre-planning are areas that can be addressed. For example, what will the participants be doing and how is it relevant to the thematic focus of the program?

Applicants should present a program that involves the greater school community. All participating schools must be identified. Proposals should describe the selected theme, its importance to the schools and communities, the specific academic activities, and the expected outcome or product of the project. Possible themes include civic education, such as citizen activism, volunteerism or community service, youth leadership training, multicultural education, rule of law, and free press.

Proposals must clearly present independent educator programs for teachers/administrators. These programs could include curriculum development seminars, shadowing of host peers in the classroom, university-level courses, or other substantive activities, with an emphasis on such themes as parent-teacher cooperation, model schools, teacher training, and collaboration with local businesses. A program that relies on the educator to act as just an escort will not be competitive.

Competitive proposals will demonstrate a solid and comprehensive follow-on plan to sustain the partnerships after the grant has expired.

Responsibilities: The U.S. organization receiving the grant will (1) design the overall plan that integrates the joint project activity and the exchange components of the partnership; (2) ensure quality control for all program elements; (3) keep the Bureau informed of its progress; (4) manage all travel arrangements, logistics, travel documents, etc.; (5) provide competent and informed escorts

for student groups; and (6) disburse and account for grant funds. Recipients of a grant are responsible for ensuring the selection of exchange participants who are most suited for the program and for providing them with a meaningful pre-departure orientation. Selection of individual participants from the U.S. and the NIS in the exchange components of the program must be open, competitive, and merit-based; the proposal should describe the mechanisms used for participant selection. All participants from the U.S. and the NIS should represent the full diversity of their communities (racial, ethnic, economic status, religious, etc.) to give greater understanding to the culture and society as a whole.

Preference will be given to proposals that include schools that have not already received funding under the NIS Secondary School Initiative for a total of three years or more.

Significant cost-sharing is mandatory in all proposals, and those that show more generous and creative cost-sharing will be more favorably viewed. Proposals that contain non-Bureau funded items such as additional students and/or educators on the exchange, U.S. participants paying for some of their own costs, computer software purchases, cultural excursions, capital city civics programs, and other significant items will be more competitive proposals than those that do not. However, NIS participants may not be charged to participate in the program, aside from paying for home country costs (such as transportation to the point of departure), the costs of hosting the U.S. students and educators, and miscellaneous expenses such as pocket money.

Please be sure to refer to the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) section of the Solicitation Package for greater detail regarding the design of the component parts as well as other program information. Also consult the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for information on budget presentation and required forms.

Budget Guidelines: Applicants must submit a comprehensive budget for the entire program. Awards may not exceed \$150,000. Only partnerships between secondary schools in the United States and these two countries are eligible for this competition.

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

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. All program costs should clearly indicate whether they cover U.S. or NIS participants. Be sure to note the statement on cost-sharing in the Guidelines section. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

Announcement Title and Number: All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the above title and number ECA/PE/C/PY-01-26.

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, SW., Washington, DC 20547, telephone (202) 619-6299; fax (202) 619-5311; E-mail: clantz@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 Carolyn Lantz on all other inquiries and correspondence.

Please read the complete **Federal Register** announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP 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/rfgps>. Please read all information before downloading.

Deadline for Proposals: All proposal copies must be received at the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs by 5:00 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on Friday, February 9, 2001. 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 proposal, one fully-tabbed copy, and seven copies including tabs A-E and appendices should be sent to: U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Ref.: ECA/PE/C/PY-01-26, Program Management, ECA/EX/PM, Room 534, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 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. The Bureau will transmit these files electronically to the Public Affairs section at the U.S. Embassy for its review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get embassy 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 reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels 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. Proposals should adequately address each area of review. These criteria are not rank ordered.

1. Quality of the program idea: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission.

2. Program planning and ability to achieve program objectives: Program objectives should be stated clearly and precisely and should reflect the applicant's understanding of the project. Objectives need to be reasonable, attainable, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution would meet the program's objectives. A detailed agenda and work plan should explain how the objectives will be achieved and the expected outcomes realized. The proposal should describe the academic substance of the project in detail. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above.

3. Multiplier effect/impact: Proposals should show how the program would strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages. Programs that include convincing plans for sustainability will be given preference.

4. Support of Diversity: Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. 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) should address diversity in a comprehensive and innovative manner.

5. Institutional Capacity and Record: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. The proposal should reflect institutional expertise in the subject area and knowledge of the conditions in the target country. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange 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.

6. Follow-on Activities: Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) ensuring that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events. Follow-on activities should be clearly outlined.

7. Program Evaluation: Proposals must include a plan and methodology to evaluate the program's successes, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique. The evaluation plan should show a clear link between program objectives and expected outcomes in the short- and medium-term, and provide a well-thought-out description of performance indicators and measurement tools.

8. 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. Administrative costs should account for 20% or less of the funding requested from the Bureau. Applicants are encouraged to cost share a portion of overhead and administrative expenses. Cost-sharing, such as auditable contributions from the applicant, the NIS partner, and other sources, should be included in the budget.

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 RFGP 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 RFGP 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: December 8, 2000.

William B. Bader,

Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State.

[FR Doc. 00-31911 Filed 12-13-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4710-05-U

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 3508]

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Request for Grant Proposals: College and University Affiliations Program With Serbia

SUMMARY: The Office of Global Educational Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award program to support the reform of higher education in the Republic of Serbia, within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Accredited, post-secondary educational institutions meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may submit proposals to pursue institutional or departmental objectives through international partnerships with counterpart institutions in Serbia. These objectives should support the overall goals of the Program: to assist the process of democratization in Serbia by facilitating the development of comprehensive plans for educational reform; and to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation among U.S. and Serbian educational institutions on themes of common interest to the United States and to the participating colleges and universities, specified below. To achieve these objectives, an applicant and its partner(s) may propose approaches including teaching, scholarship, and outreach to professionals and other members of the communities served by the participating institutions. Eligible fields are economics, political science, social sciences, communications, journalism, and law.

Program Information

Underlying the specific institutional objectives of the project funded by this program should be the goals of encouraging the growth of freedom and democracy in Serbia through a deepened understanding of fundamental issues and practical applications in the development of civil society, economic stability and prosperity, or the free flow of information. Innovative strategies to address these underlying concerns in the pursuit of clearly defined institutional objectives are encouraged. Outreach from academic institutions to larger communities of citizens and practitioners to extend understanding about these issues is also encouraged.

Funds available under this year's program are restricted to the support of linkages with institutions in Serbia. Please consult with the program office regarding future opportunities for linkages elsewhere in Yugoslavia.

In addition, the Bureau supports institutional linkages in higher education with partners from the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union through the NIS College and University Partnerships Program (NISCUPP) and the NIS Community College Partnerships Program (NISCCPP). A Request for Grant Proposals for NISCUPP was announced on July 27, 2000 with a deadline of January 19, 2001. Community Colleges wishing to pursue partnership projects with counterpart institutions in Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, or Uzbekistan may apply under the Request for Grant Proposals for the NISCCPP program, which was announced on November 9, 2000 with a deadline of February 23, 2001. A Request for Grant Proposals for an assistance award to support instruction and faculty training in Business Management, Entrepreneurship, and Public Administration at the University of Pristina, Kosovo, is currently open, with a deadline of March 14, 2001. The Bureau's support for institutional linkages in higher education is also provided through the College and University Affiliations Program for other world regions, including Europe. The annual Request for Grant Proposals for FY2002 is expected to be published in the spring of 2001. Applicants interested in any of these additional programs should contact the Bureau's Humphrey Fellowships and Institutional Linkages Branch at (202) 619-5289.

Applicant Objectives

In the College and University Affiliations Program with Serbia,

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.

Both the U.S. and foreign participating institutions should benefit from the partnership, although the nature and scope of those benefits may differ. It is especially important that proposals outline well-reasoned strategies leading to specific, demonstrable changes at the department or institution in Serbia. 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 Serbian partner institution(s) in one or more of the eligible disciplines. Administrative reform at the Serbian 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, the participating institutions should also make their 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 the 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