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Dated: January 23, 2007.

**Margaret Spellings,**

*Secretary of Education.*

[FR Doc. E7–1354 Filed 1–26–07; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4000–01–P**

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## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## Office of Postsecondary Education; Overview Information; American Overseas Research Centers Program; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2007

*Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number:* 84.274A.

*Dates:* Applications Available: January 29, 2007.

*Deadline for Transmittal of Applications:* March 15, 2007.

*Deadline for Intergovernmental Review:* May 14, 2007.

*Eligible Applicants:* Any American overseas research center that is a consortium of United States institutions of higher education that (1) Receives more than 50 percent of their funding from public or private United States sources; (2) has a permanent presence in the country in which the center is located; and (3) is an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, which is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of the Code.

*Estimated Available Funds:* The Administration has requested $1,150,000 for the American Overseas Research Centers Program for FY 2007, which we intend to use for new awards. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final congressional action. However, we are inviting applications to allow enough time to complete the grant process if Congress appropriates funds for this program.

*Estimated Range of Awards:* $42,000–$130,000 per year.

*Estimated Average Size of Awards:* $82,143.

*Estimated Number of Awards:* 14.

**Note:** The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

*Project Period:* Up to 48 months.

**Full Text of Announcement**

**I. Funding Opportunity Description**

*Purpose of Program:* The American Overseas Research Centers (AORC) Program provides grants to any American overseas research center that is a consortium of United States institutions of higher education to enable the center to promote postgraduate research, exchanges, and area studies. AORC grants may be used to pay all or a portion of the cost of establishing or operating a center or program, including the cost of operation and maintenance of overseas facilities; the cost of organizing and managing conferences; the cost of teaching and research materials; the cost of acquisition, maintenance, and preservation of library collections; the cost of bringing visiting scholars and faculty to the center to teach or to conduct research; the cost of faculty and staff stipends and salaries; the cost of faculty, staff, and student travel; and the cost of publication and dissemination of material for the scholarly and general public.

*Priorities:* In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(i), we are particularly interested in applications that meet the following invitational priorities.

*Invitational Priorities:* For FY 2007 these priorities are invitational priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) we do not give an application that meets these priorities a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

These priorities are:

*Invitational Priority 1:* Projects that propose to establish new or to maintain existing overseas immersion language study programs to enhance advanced language training to students, faculty, and postgraduate researchers.

*Invitational Priority 2:* Applications that propose to establish new or to maintain existing centers in countries where the following critical languages are spoken: Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Russian, as well as the Indic, Iranian, and Turkic language families.

*Program Authority:* 20 U.S.C. 1128a.

*Applicable Regulations:* The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 86, 97, 98, and 99.

**Note:** The regulations in 34 CFR Part 86 apply to institutions of higher education only.

**Note:** The AORC Program does not have program specific regulations; therefore, applicants are directed to the authorizing statute, section 609 of part A, title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 1128a.

**II. Award Information**

*Type of Award:* Discretionary grants.

*Estimated Available Funds:* The Administration has requested $1,150,000 for the American Overseas Research Centers Program for FY 2007, which we intend to use for new awards. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final congressional action. However, we are inviting applications to allow enough time to complete the grant process if Congress appropriates funds for this program.

*Estimated Range of Awards:* $42,000–$130,000 per year.

*Estimated Average Size of Awards:* $82,143.

*Estimated Number of Awards:* 14.

**Note:** The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

*Project Period:* Up to 48 months.

**III. Eligibility Information**

1. *Eligible Applicants:* Any American overseas research center that is a consortium of United States institutions of higher education that (1) Receives more than 50 percent of their funding from public or private United States sources; (2) has a permanent presence in the country in which the center is located; and (3) is an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, which is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of the Code.

2. *Cost Sharing or Matching:* This program does not involve cost sharing or matching.

**IV. Application and Submission Information**

1. *Address to Request Application Package:* Cheryl E. Gibbs, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., suite 6083, Washington, DC 20006–8521. Telephone: (202) 502–7634 or by e-mail: *cheryl.gibbs@ed.gov.*

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1–800–877–8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format (*e.g.*, Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer

diskette) by contacting the program contact person listed in this section.

2. *Content and Form of Application Submission:* Requirements concerning the content of an application, together with the forms you must submit, are in the application package and instructions for this program. Page Limit: The program narrative is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. You must limit the section of the narrative that addresses the selection criteria to the equivalent of no more than 25 pages, using the following standards:

• A ''page'' is 8.5″ x 11″, on one side only, with 1″ margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. Page numbers and an identifier may be outside of the 1″ margin.

• Double space (no more than three lines per vertical inch) all text in the application narrative, except titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions. Charts, tables, figures, and graphs in the application narrative may be single spaced and will count toward the page limit.

• Use a font that is either 12-point or larger or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch). However, you may use a 10-point font in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.

• Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New or Arial. Applications submitted in any other font (including Times Roman and Arial Narrow) will be rejected.

• The page limit does not apply to Part I, the Application for Federal Assistance (SF–424); the supplemental information form required by the Department of Education; Part II, the budget information summary form (ED Form 524); and Part IV, the assurances and certifications. The page limit also does not apply to a table of contents. If you include any attachments or appendices not specifically requested, these items will be counted as part of the program narrative (Part III) for purposes of the page limit requirement. You must include your complete response to the selection criteria in the program narrative.

We will reject your application if:

• You apply these standards and exceed the page limit; or

• You apply other standards and exceed the equivalent of the page limit.

3. *Submission Dates and Times:* Applications Available: January 29, 2007. Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: March 15, 2007.

Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov). For information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically or by mail or hand delivery if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, please refer to Section IV. 6. *Other submission Requirements* in this notice.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: May 14, 2007.

We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements.

4. *Intergovernmental Review:* This program is subject to the requirements of Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application package for this program.

5. *Funding Restrictions:* We reference the regulations outlining funding restrictions in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

6. *Other Submission Requirements:* Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement in accordance with the instructions in this section.

a. *Electronic Submission of Applications.* Applications for grants under the American Overseas Research Centers Program—CFDA Number 84.274A must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site at: *http://www.grants.gov*. Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your application. You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, as described elsewhere in this section, you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. Further information regarding calculation of the date that is two weeks before the application deadline date is provided later in this section under *Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement*.

You may access the electronic grant application for the American Overseas Research Centers Program at: *http://www.grants.gov*. You must search for the downloadable application package for this program by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search.

Please note the following:

• When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.

• Applications received by Grants.gov are time and date stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted, and must be date/time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Except as otherwise noted in this section, we will not consider your application if it is date/time stamped by the Grants.gov system later than 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date/time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

• The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

• You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this program to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov at: *http://e-Grants.ed.gov/help/GrantsgovSubmissionProcedures.pdf*.

• To submit your application via Grants.gov, you must complete all the steps in the Grants.gov registration process (see *http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp*). These steps include: (1) Registering your organization, (2) registering yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR), and (3) getting authorized as an AOR by your organization. Details on these steps are outlined in the Grants.gov 3-Step Registration Guide (see *http://www.grants.gov/section910/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf*). You also must provide on your application the same D–U–N–S Number used with this registration. Please note that the registration process may take five or more business days to complete, and you must have completed all registration steps to allow you to

successfully submit an application via Grants.gov.

• You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, as described elsewhere in this section, and submit your application in paper format.

• You must submit all documents electronically including all information typically included on the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424), Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications. You must attach any narrative sections of your application as files in a .DOC (document), .RTF (rich text), or .PDF (Portable Document) format. If you upload a file type other than the three file types specified above or submit a password protected file, we will not review that material.

• Your electronic application must comply with any page limit requirements described in this notice.

• After you electronically submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. The Department will retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send you a second confirmation by e-mail that will include a PR/Award number (an ED-specified identifying number unique to your application).

• We may request that you provide us original signatures on forms at a later date.

*Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of Technical Issues with the Grants.gov System:* If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, the following business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically, or by hand delivery. You also may mail your application by following the mailing instructions as described elsewhere in this notice. If you submit an application after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the deadline date, please contact either of the persons listed elsewhere in this notice under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT,** and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number (if available). We will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that that problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. The Department will contact you after a determination is made on whether your application will be accepted.

**Note:** Extensions referred to in this section apply only to the unavailability of or technical problems with the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the deadline date and time; or, if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

*Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement:* You qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, and may submit your application in paper format, if you are unable to submit an application through the Grants.gov system because—

• You do not have access to the Internet; or

• You do not have the capacity to upload large documents to the Grants.gov system;

*and*

• No later than two weeks before the application deadline date (14 calendar days or, if the fourteenth calendar day before the application deadline date falls on a Federal holiday, the next business day following the Federal holiday), you mail or fax a written statement to the Department, explaining which of the two grounds for an exception prevent you from using the Internet to submit your application. If you mail your written statement to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. If you fax your written statement to the Department, we must receive the faxed statement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.

Address and mail or fax your statement to: Cheryl E. Gibbs, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., Suite 6083, Washington, DC 20006–8521. Fax: (202) 502–7860.

Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail or hand delivery instructions described in this notice.

b. *Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.*

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you may mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) your application to the Department. You must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the applicable following address:

*By mail through the U.S. Postal Service:*
U.S. Department of Education,
Application Control Center,
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.274A),
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.,
Washington, DC 20202–4260.

or

*By mail through a commercial carrier:*
U.S. Department of Education,
Application Control Center—Stop 4260, Attention: (CFDA Number 84.274A), 7100 Old Landover Road,
Landover, MD 20785–1506.

Regardless of which address you use, you must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

(1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark,

(2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service,

(3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier, or

(4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

(1) A private metered postmark, or

(2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

**Note:** The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

c. *Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery.*

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You must deliver the original and two copies of your application, by hand, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address: U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: (CFDA Number 84.274A), 550 12th Street, SW., Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202–4260.

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

**Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications:** If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department:

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and—if not provided by the Department—in Item 11 of the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424) the CFDA number—and suffix letter, if any—of the competition under which you are submitting your application.

(2) The Application Control Center will mail a grant application receipt acknowledgment to you. If you do not receive the grant application receipt acknowledgment within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245–6288.

*V. Application Review Information*

*Selection Criteria:* The selection criteria for this program are from 34 CFR 75.209(a) and 75.210, and are as follows—

Meets the purposes of the authorizing statute (20 points); Need for project (15 points); Significance (10 points); Quality of the project design (15 points); Quality of project services (10 points); Quality of project personnel (10 points); Adequacy of resources (10 points); and Quality of the project evaluation (10 points). Additional information regarding these criteria is in the application package for this competition.

*VI. Award Administration Information*

1. *Award Notices:* If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN). We may also notify you informally.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. *Administrative and National Policy Requirements:* We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. *Reporting:* At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multi-year award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as specified by the Secretary in 34 CFR 75.118. Grantees are required to use the electronic data instrument *Evaluation of Exchange, Language, International, and Area Studies* (EELIAS) to complete the final report.

4. *Performance Measures:* Under the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the following measures will be used by the Department in assessing the performance of the American Overseas Research Centers Program:

(1) The percent of projects judged to be successful by the program officer, based on a review of information provided in annual performance reports. The information provided by grantees in their performance reports submitted via EELIAS will be the source of data for this measure.

(2) The percentage of scholars who indicated they were ''highly satisfied'' with the services the Center provided.

**VII. Agency Contact**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Cheryl E. Gibbs, International Education Programs Service, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., suite 6083, Washington, DC 20006–8521. Telephone: (202) 502–7634 or by e-mail: *cheryl.gibbs@ed.gov*

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1–800–877–8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternative format (*e.g.*, Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) on request to the program contact person listed in this section.

*VIII. Other Information*

*Electronic Access to This Document:* You may view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the **Federal Register**, in text or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) on the Internet at the following site: *http://www.ed.gov/news/fedregister.*

To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at this site. If you have questions about using PDF, call the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), toll free, at 1–888–293–6498; or in the Washington, DC, area at (202) 512–1530.

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Dated: January 24, 2007.

**James F. Manning,**

*Delegated the Authority of the Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education.*

[FR Doc. 07–354 Filed 1–26–07; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4000–01–P**

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**[CFDA No. 84.031A]**

## Strengthening Institutions Program

**AGENCY:** Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent to fund down the grant slate for the Strengthening Institutions Program.

**SUMMARY:** The Secretary intends to use the grant slate developed for the Strengthening Institutions Program in Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 to make new grant awards in FY 2007. The Secretary takes this action because a significant number of high-quality applications remain on last year's grant slate. The actual level of funding for the FY 2007 program, if any, depends on final Congressional action.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Maria E. Carrington, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., 6th Floor, Washington, DC 20006–6450. *Telephone:* (202) 502–7548 or *via Internet: maria.carrington@ed.gov*

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1–800–877–8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain this document in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) on request to the contact person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### Background

On May 19, 2006, we published a notice in the **Federal Register** (71 FR 29130) inviting applications for new awards under the Strengthening Institutions Program.

We received a significant number of applications for grants under the Strengthening Institutions Program in FY 2006 and made 34 new grants. Because such a large number of high-quality applications were received, many applications that were awarded high scores by peer reviewers did not receive funding for FY 2006.

Limited funding is available for new awards under this program in FY 2007. To conserve funding that would have been required for a peer review of new grant applications and use those funds to support grant activities, we will select grantees in FY 2007 from the existing slate of applicants. This slate was developed during the FY 2006 competition using the selection criteria, application requirements, and definitions referenced in the May 19,