

and in the Solicitation Package. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of USIA officers for advisory review. All eligible proposals will also be reviewed by the Agency contracts office, as well as USIA's East European and NIS Area Office and the USIA post overseas, where appropriate. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel or by other Agency elements. Funding decisions are at the discretion of the USIA Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (grants or cooperative agreements) resides with the USIA grants officer.

#### Review Criteria

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. Quality of the program idea: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to USIA's mission to promote mutual understanding.
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. Multiplier effect/impact: Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.
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 (selection of participants and host families, program venue, and program evaluation) and program content (orientation and wrap-on sessions, programs meetings, resource materials and follow-up activities).
5. Institutional Capacity: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to carry out the responsibilities listed above.
6. Institution's Record/Ability: Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful administration of exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Agency grants as determined by USIA's Office of Contracts. The Agency will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

7. Project Evaluation: Proposals should include a plan to evaluate both the performance of the students and the grantee organization's success in achieving the goals of the program as outlined above. USIA recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other evaluation technique plus description of a methodology to use. Award-receiving organizations/institutions will be expected to submit quarterly reports.

8. Cost-effectiveness: The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate.

9. Cost-sharing: Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

#### Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any USIA representative.

Explanatory information provided by the Agency that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Agency reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal USIA procedures.

#### Notification

All applicants will be notified of the results of the review process after January 8. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

Dated: September 1, 1995.

#### Dell Pendergrast,

*Deputy Associate Director, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.*

[FR Doc. 95-22192 Filed 9-6-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

### Freedom Support Act Secondary School Initiative—U.S./NIS Academic Studies Inbound/Outbound Program

**ACTION:** Notice—request for proposals.

**SUMMARY:** The Division for the Secondary School Initiative, Office of Citizen Exchanges of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an

assistance award to facilitate academic exchanges between American high school students and students from the 12 New Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union. Public and private non-profit organizations and educational institutions meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 25 CFR 1.501(c)(3)-1 may apply to develop projects that promote the purposes of this program, which are to: (a) Build the capacity of organizations to conduct academic exchanges at the secondary school level between the U.S. and the NIS; (b) sponsor study opportunities in the U.S. for NIS high-school-aged students; and (c) promote study abroad opportunities in the NIS for Americans. Applicants may apply for grants of up to two years duration. Exchanges of three to six months duration may take place during the 1997 spring semester, the 1997 fall semester, the 1998 spring semester, and the 1998 fall semester. Full year inbound and outbound exchanges may take place during the 1997-98 academic year.

The countries of the NIS are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Secondary School Exchange Initiative, as originally authorized in the Freedom Support Act of 1992 (P.L. 102-391). It is anticipated that \$4 million will be allotted to this program.

Programs and projects must conform with Agency requirements and guidelines as outlined in the Solicitation Package. USIA projects are subject to the availability of funds.

**ANNOUNCEMENT TITLE AND NUMBER:** All communications with USIA concerning this announcement should refer to the above title and reference number E/P-96-15. This is a request for proposals only for the program models described above. Requests for proposals in support of other youth exchange programs with the NIS are being published separately.

**DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS:** All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on Friday, January 12, 1996. Faxed documents will not be accepted, nor will documents postmarked on January 12, 1996 but received at a later date. It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that proposals are received by the above deadline. Notification of awards will be announced on or after April 12, 1996. Grant funds should be available by June 1, 1996.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

The Division for the Secondary School Initiative, E/PY, Room 320, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547, telephone: (202) 619-6299; fax (202) 619-5311, internet address: sjones@usia.gov to request a Solicitation Package, which includes more detailed criteria; all application forms; and guidelines for preparing proposals, including specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget. Please specify USIA Program Officer, Shalita Jones on all inquiries and correspondences. Interested applicants should read the complete **Federal Register** announcement before addressing inquiries or submitting their proposals to the Division of the Secondary School Initiative. Once the RFP deadline has passed, Division representatives may not discuss this competition in any way with applicants until the Bureau's proposal review process has been completed.

**SUBMISSIONS:** Applicants must follow all instructions given in the Solicitation Package. The original and 10 copies of the complete application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/P-96-15, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 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. This material must be provided in ASCII text (DOS) format with a maximum line length of 65 characters. USIA will transmit these files electronically to USIS posts overseas for their review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get posts' comments for the Agency's grants review process.

**DIVERSITY GUIDELINES:** Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representatives 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 and administration of its program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the "Support for Diversity" section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Overview**

The purpose of this program is to provide the opportunity for American students to study at a school and experience life with a host family and its community in one of the 12 New Independent States of the former Soviet Union, and, to sponsor students from the NIS to study at an American school and experience life with a host family and its community in the U.S. The programs are intended to provide avenues that will enhance the students' understanding of each country's political, social, and cultural and ethnic diversity; to promote the exchange of ideas; and to foster long-term friendships, through courses of study such as history, social studies, civics, and global economics and environmental issues, as well as through living and interacting with their host families and communities. Initial grant funding is also intended to facilitate the creation of partnerships with NIS organizations seeking to promote exchanges, and to assist U.S. non-profit organizations to build their own capacity to conduct exchange business in the NIS which will promote a long-term future for exchanges beyond federal funding.

This program has four components. Please note that each component is independent of the other and is not subject to reciprocity. Applicants may opt to apply for any or a combination of any or all four of the following components:

**A. Outbound Semester**

This component will give American high-school students a chance to live with a host family and study at the secondary school level in an NIS country for a period of no less than three months.

**B. Inbound Semester**

This component provides opportunities for NIS high-school students to live with a host family and study at secondary-level institutions for one academic semester in the U.S.

**C. Academic Year Outbound**

This component provides opportunities for American high-school students to study for a school year (no less than 9 months) in a country of the former Soviet Union, and to more fully experience the life and culture of a host family and its community.

**D. Academic Year Inbound**

This component provides the opportunity for students from the

former Soviet Union to study for a school year (no less than 9 months) at an American high school, and to experience the life and culture of a host family and its community.

**Guidelines**

There is no prescribed formula for either component of the program, however, organizations should encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities and provide students with community-based activities. Also, organizations have the option to concentrate groups of students in regional clusters or disperse students wisely. The purpose of clustering is to facilitate periodic gatherings for ongoing orientation, excursions and cultural programming, and well as supervision and feedback. Organizations should identify in their proposals the target regions, states and/or communities in which placements will be sought, and describe how placements in those areas will benefit students and the overall purpose of the program. The names and addresses of prospective schools and letters of agreement to participate from relevant school/district/community officials should be included in the proposal. Regardless of the placement plan, organizations may propose periodic gatherings of students locally, regionally, or nationally.

Grantee organizations working with their offices overseas and/or NIS partners will: Recruit and select students based on merit using their own criteria; arrange for their placement in schools; select host families; make all travel and logistical arrangements; conduct orientation, re-entry, and debriefing sessions for students and hosts; supervise students, solve problems, and provide counseling as needed; develop a mechanism for the transfer of academic credit and/or the certification of school attendance; interact with the schools on an ongoing basis; and evaluate the program's success.

Proposals should succinctly describe how these elements will be handled, with special attention to the following factors:

A. Proposals must demonstrate the organization's capacity to secure quality homestays and school placements for the number of students on which they are bidding by describing the process it uses to identify and screen potential host families, as well as its system for making school placements.

B. Organizations using the cluster method should: specify the cluster size and likely locations; and include a description of how clustering will affect the program, such as scheduling

periodic gatherings of the students. A sample schedule of gatherings and topics or themes to be addressed should be included.

C. Organizations using the dispersal method should explain its placement philosophy; describe how dispersal will affect the program; and if planning periodic gatherings the proposal should include a tentative itinerary for sample meetings.

D. Inbound students should be sufficiently proficient in English upon arrival in the U.S. in order to function in a high-school environment. However, no USIA grant funding will be provided for English training under this program.

Preference will be given to proposals that include language skills as a selection criterion for American students going to the NIS. Applicant organizations with alternative approaches to language qualifications should discuss them in the proposal.

Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations. Visa applications (IAP-66 forms) for NIS participants will be processed by the program office. Please refer to program specific guidelines in the POGI section of the Solicitation Package for further details.

#### **Eligibility**

Private not-for-profit organizations and public educational institutions including secondary schools, school districts, state education agencies, and organizational and educational consortiums are invited to participate. Grants awarded to eligible organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to \$60,000.

#### **Proposed Budget**

Applicants must submit a comprehensive line-item budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as a breakdown reflecting both the administrative budget and the program budget. For better understanding or further clarification, applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity in order to facilitate USIA decisions on funding. Cost-sharing is encouraged and may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. Please refer to the Solicitation Package and Guidelines for complete budget and formatting instructions, and allowable costs.

#### **Review Process**

USIA will acknowledge receipt of all proposals and will review them for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein

and in the Solicitation Package. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of USIA officers for advisory review. All eligible proposals will also be reviewed by the Agency contracts office, as well as the Agency's Area Office and the relevant USIA post overseas. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel or by other Agency elements. Funding decisions are at the discretion of the Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for grant awards resides with the USIA grants officer.

#### **Review Criteria**

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. Quality of the program idea: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to Agency'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. Proposals should also clearly demonstrate how students will be selected on the basis of merit and the qualifications needed for a successful program.
3. Ability to achieve program objectives: Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.
4. Multiplier effect/impact: Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.
5. Support of Diversity: Proposals should demonstrate the recipient's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity throughout the program. This can be accomplished through documentation (such as a written statement or account) summarizing past and/or ongoing activities and efforts that further the principle of diversity within both the organization and the program activities.
6. Institutional Capacity: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals.
7. Institution's Record/Ability: Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full

compliance with all reporting requirements for past Agency grants as determined by USIA's Office of Contracts. The Agency will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

8. Follow-on Activities: Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without USIA support) which ensures that USIA supported programs are not isolated events.

9. Project Evaluation: Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the success of the program, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. USIA recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique, plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. Award-receiving organizations/institutions will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded or quarterly reports, whichever is less frequent.

10. Cost-effectiveness: The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate.

11. Cost-sharing: Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

12. Value to U.S.-Partner Country Relations: Proposed projects should receive positive assessments by USIA's geographic area desk and overseas officers of program need, potential impact, and significance in the partner country(ies).

#### **Notice**

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any USIA representative. Explanatory information provided by the Agency that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Agency reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal USIA procedures.

#### **Notification**

All applicants will be notified of the results of the review process on or about

April 12, 1996. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

Dated: September 1, 1995.

**Dell Pendergrast,**

*Deputy Associate Director, Educational and Cultural Affairs.*

[FR Doc. 95-22193 Filed 9-6-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

**Meeting of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee**

**SUMMARY:** The Cultural Property Advisory Committee will meet on September 13 and 14, 1995, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The sessions on September 13 will be held in the Meem Auditorium, Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, 710 Camino Lego, Santa Fe, from approximately 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The agenda will include discussions concerning public awareness, expanding institutional dialogue on the protection of cultural property, and developments in museum ethics. There will also be a presentation on an initiative about "Protecting Cultural Objects Through International Documentation Standards." Technological developments in law enforcement will also be addressed. The September 13 portion of the meeting will be open to the public. Due to limited space, persons wishing to attend must call (202) 619-6612 no later than 4 p.m. (EDST), September 12, 1995. Only persons who have telephoned in advance will be permitted in the meeting room. The meeting on September 14 will be held in the Board Room of the School of American Research, 660 Garcia St. The entire meeting held on September 14 will be closed to the public pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(9)(B) and 19 U.S.C. 2605(h). The agenda will include the review of cultural property import restrictions currently in place under the Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act (19 U.S.C. 2601 et. al., P.L. 97-446) and deliberations concerning internal Committee and agency operations.

Dated: August 31, 1995.

**Penn Kemble,**

*Acting Director, United States Information Agency.*

**Determination To Close; The Entire Meeting of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee; September 14, 1995**

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552b(c)(9)(B), and 19 U.S.C. 2605(h), I

hereby determine that the entire meeting of the Cultural Property Advisory Committee on September 14, 1995, which is devoted (1) to review of the effectiveness of import restrictions in place for Peru, Guatemala, Bolivia, El Salvador and Mali; and (2) to a discussion of internal operating procedures and a review of statutory interpretations may be closed to the public.

Dated: August 31, 1995.

**Penn Kemble,**

*Acting Director, United States Information Agency.*

[FR Doc. 95-22126 Filed 9-6-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**Medical Research Service Merit Review Committee; Notice of Meetings**

The Department of Veterans Affairs gives notice under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App., of the following meetings to be held from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Central, 1501 Rhode Island Avenue, NW., Washington, DC:

Subcommittee for	Date
Alcoholism and Drug Dependence.	September 21 and 22, 1995.
Hematology .....	September 21 and 22, 1995.
Nephrology .....	September 26 and 27, 1995.
Respiration .....	September 27 and 28, 1995.
General Medical Science.	September 29 and 30, 1995.
Surgery .....	September 30 and October 1, 1995.
Cardiovascular .....	October 2 and 3, 1995.
Endocrinology .....	October 9 and 10, 1995.
Mental Health and Behavioral Sciences.	October 11 and 12, 1995.
Aging and Clinical Geriatrics.	October 12 and 13, 1995.
Infectious Diseases ...	October 16 and 17, 1995.
Neurobiology .....	October 16 and 17, 1995.
Immunology .....	October 19 and 20, 1995.
Oncology .....	October 19 and 20, 1995.
Gastroenterology .....	October 23 and 24, 1995.
Medical Research Service Merit Review Committee.	December 5, 1995.

These meetings will be for the purpose of evaluating the scientific merit of research conducted in each speciality by Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) investigators working in VA Medical Centers and Clinics.

These meetings will be open to the public up to the seating capacity of the rooms at the start of each meeting to discuss the general status of the program. All of the Merit Review Subcommittee meetings will be closed to the public after approximately one hour from the start for the review, discussion, and evaluation of initial and renewal projects.

The closed portion of the meeting involves: discussion, examination, reference to, and oral review of site visits, staff and consultant critiques of research protocols and similar documents. During this portion of the meeting, discussion and recommendations will deal with qualifications of personnel conducting the studies, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, as well as research information, the premature disclosure of which would be likely to significantly frustrate implementation of proposed agency action regarding such research projects. As provided by subsection 10(d) of Public Law 92-463, as amended by Public Law 94-409, closing portions of these meetings is in accordance with 5 U.S.C., 552b(c)(6) and (9)(B). Because of the limited seating capacity of the rooms, those who plan to attend should contact Dr. LeRoy Frey, Chief, Program Review Division, Medical Research Service, Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC, (202) 565-5942, at least five days prior to each meeting. Minutes of the meetings and rosters of the members of the Subcommittees may be obtained from this source.

Dated: August 31, 1995.

By direction of the Secretary.

**Heyward Bannister,**

*Committee Management Officer.*

[FR Doc. 95-22312 Filed 9-6-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320-01-M