

Dated: November 17, 1997.

John Durant,

Director, Mod Act Task Force.

[FR Doc. 97-30557 Filed 11-19-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Internal Revenue Service

Proposed Collection; Comment Request for Notice 97-64

AGENCY: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Treasury, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to take this opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13 (44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). Currently, the IRS is soliciting comments concerning Notice 97-64, Temporary regulations to be issued under section 1(h) of the Internal Revenue Code (applying section 1(h) to capital gain dividends of RICs and REITs).

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before January 20, 1998 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Garrick R. Shear, Internal Revenue Service, room 5571, 1111 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20224.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection should be directed to Carol Savage, (202) 622-3945, Internal Revenue Service, room 5569, 1111 Constitution Avenue NW., Washington, DC 20224.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Temporary regulations to be issued under section 1(h) of the Internal Revenue Code (applying section 1(h) to capital gain dividends of RICs and REITs).

OMB Number: 1545-1565.

Notice Number: Notice 97-64.

Abstract: Notice 97-64 provides notice of forthcoming temporary regulations that will permit Regulated Investment Companies (RICs) and Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) to distribute multiple classes of capital gain dividends.

Current Actions: There are no changes being made to the notice at this time.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations, and individuals.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 3,000.

Estimated Time Per Respondent: 30 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden

Hours: 1,500.

The following paragraph applies to all of the collections of information covered by this notice:

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a valid OMB control number. Books or records relating to a collection of information must be retained as long as their contents may become material in the administration of any internal revenue law. Generally, tax returns and tax return information are confidential, as required by 26 U.S.C. 6103.

Request for Comments

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record. Comments are invited on: (a) whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and (e) estimates of capital or start-up costs and costs of operation, maintenance, and purchase of services to provide information.

Approved: November 13, 1997.

Garrick R. Shear,

IRS Reports Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 97-30551 Filed 11-19-97; 8:45 am]

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UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

Edmund S. Muskie and Freedom Support Act Graduate Fellowship Programs

ACTION: Request for proposals.

SUMMARY: Subject to the availability of funds, the Office of Academic Programs, Academic Exchange Programs Division,

European Programs Branch of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may apply to administer the recruitment, selection, placement, monitoring, evaluation, and follow-on activities for the FY 1999 Edmund S. Muskie and Freedom Support Act Graduate Fellowship Programs. Organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs are not eligible for this competition.

The Edmund S. Muskie and Freedom Support Act Graduate Fellowship Programs (herein to be referred to as the Muskie/FSA Programs) select outstanding citizens of the New Independent States (NIS) and the Baltics to receive scholarships for Master's level study and professional development in the United States in the fields of business administration, economics, education administration, law with a new subfocus in law pedagogy, library and information science, mass communication/journalism, public administration with specialized programs in public health and environmental management, and public policy. Fellowships are awarded to qualified young and mid-career individuals who are citizens of Armenia, Azerbaijan,* Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, or Uzbekistan. Edmund S. Muskie fellows enroll in graduate degree, certificate, and non-degree programs lasting one-to-two academic years. It is estimated that approximately 245-255 Fellows will participate in the 1999 program. Interested organizations should read the complete **Federal Register** announcement and request a Solicitation Package from the USIA prior to preparing a proposal.

*** Please note:** Programs with Azerbaijan are subject to restrictions of Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act: Employees of the Government of Azerbaijan or any of its instrumentalities are excluded from participation, and no U.S. participant overseas may work for the Government of Azerbaijan or any of its instrumentalities. In addition, the Government of Azerbaijan or any of its instrumentalities will have no control in the actual selection of participants.

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Pub. L. 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."

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

Announcement Title and Number: All communications with USIA concerning this RFP should refer to the announcement's title and reference number E/AEE-99-02.

Deadline For Proposals: All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on Thursday, March 26, 1998. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Documents postmarked by the due date but received at a later date will not be accepted.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Office of Academic Programs, European Programs Branch of the U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547, (P) 202-205-0525 (F) 202-260-7985 (E-Mail) treed@usia.gov to request a Solicitation Package containing more detailed. Please request required application forms, and standard guidelines for preparing proposals, including specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget.

To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet: The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from USIA's website at <http://www.usia.gov/education/rfps>. Please read all information before downloading.

To Receive a Solicitation Package Via Fax On Demand: The entire Solicitation Package may be received via the Bureau's "Grants Information Fax on Demand System", which is accessed by calling 202/401-7616. Please request a "Catalog" of available documents and order numbers when first entering the system.

Please specify USIA Senior Program Manager Ted Kniker on all inquiries and correspondence. Interested applicants should read the complete **Federal Register** announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFP deadline has passed, Agency staff may not discuss this competition in

any way with applicants until the Bureau proposal review process has been completed.

Submissions: Applicants must follow all instructions given in the Solicitation Package. The original and 14 copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/AEE-99-01, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

Applicants must also submit the "Executive Summary" and "Proposal Narrative" sections of the Proposal on a 3.5" diskette, formatted for DOS. This material must be provided in ASCII text (DOS) format with a maximum line length of 65 characters. 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, 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. Pub. L. 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of education and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy", USIA "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Proposals should account for advancement of this goal in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Overview

The Muskie/FSA Fellowship Programs are designed to foster democratization and the transition to market economies in the former soviet Union and Baltic States through intensive academic and professional training. Since the programs' inceptions in fiscal years 1992 and 1993, over 900 Fellowships have been awarded. The

academic component of the program begins in the fall semester of the year of the award and follows the normal one-to two-year academic cycle in which Fellows may take a nine, twelve, eighteen, or twenty-four month academic program. Fellows take part in a eight- to twelve-week internship during the summer following the first academic year. While fellows are closely assisted in their internship search by host institutions, sponsoring organizations, and USIA, the primary responsibility for securing appropriate internships remains with the Fellows. Fellows placed in one-year graduate programs return home at the conclusion of their internship. Fellows placed in two year graduate programs return to their academic placement following the internship. The Muskie/FSA Programs are not intended as a precursor to doctoral studies, extended professional training, or employment in the United States. At the end of their designated academic and internship programs, Fellows are required to immediately return to their home countries.

In the past, the Muskie/FSA Programs have been administered by up to four organizations working in close partnership for all phases of the program. In order to maintain efficient administration of the program the number of organizations administering the Muskie/FSA Programs may remain at two or three. Should an applicant organization prefer to work with other organizations in the implementation of this program, USIA prefers that a subcontract arrangement be developed. USIA will entertain separately submitted proposals from two or more organizations for joint program management, but the proposals must demonstrate a value-added relationship, and must clearly delineate responsibilities so as not to duplicate efforts.

Proposing organizations must demonstrate the ability to administer all aspects of the Muskie/FSA Programs—advertisement, recruitment, selection, placement, orientation, Fellow monitoring and support, financial management, evaluation, follow-on, and alumni tracking and programing. Applicant organizations must demonstrate the ability to recruit and select a diverse pool of candidates from various geographic regions in the NIS and Baltics. Additionally, organizations will be asked to assist in the recruitment and selection of appropriate host institutions from throughout the United States for pre-academic, ESL, and academic programs. Administering organizations will act as the principle liaison with Muskie/FSA host

institutions. Additionally, organizations should demonstrate the ability to work with private sector organizations in the United States, NIS and Baltics to facilitate Fellows' professional development and post-program re-entry. Further details on specific program responsibilities can be found in the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) Statement which is part of the formal Solicitation Package available from the USIA.

Awards will begin on or about October 1, 1998 and will be approximately three years in duration. Initial recruitment and selection activities may be performed in conjunction with the current administering organizations.

Guidelines

Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations. Please refer to program specific guidelines (POGI) in the Solicitation Package for further details.

The level of funding for fiscal year 1999 is uncertain, but is anticipated to be a total of \$13 million.

Proposed Budget

Organizations must submit a comprehensive line item budget based on the specific guidance in the Solicitation Package. There must be a summary budget as well as a breakdown reflecting both the administrative budget and the program budget. Organizations whose proposals include an administrative budget that is less than 20% of the grant amount requested from the USIA will be given preference. Detailed guidance on budget preparation is included in the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) and PSI. Please refer to the complete Solicitation package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

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 be reviewed by the program office, as well as the USIA Office of Eastern Europe and NIS Affairs and the USIA post overseas, where appropriate. Proposals may 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 officers.

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 plan: Proposed programs should include academic rigor, thorough conception of project, demonstration of meeting participants needs, contributions to understanding the partner country, proposed alumni activities, specific details of recruitment, selection and monitoring processes, a thorough evaluation plan, proposed follow-on, and relevance to USIA's mission.

2. Program planning and institutional capacity: A detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution and its staff will meet the program objectives and plan.

3. Track record: Relevant USIA and outside assessments of the organization's experience with international exchanges.

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. Value of U.S.-Partner Country relations: The assessment by USIA's geographic area office of the need, potential impact, and significance of the project with the partner countries.

6. Cost-effectiveness: A key measure of cost effectiveness is the unit cost to the Agency. This is the total request of USIA monies divided by the number of Fellow months (number of Fellows multiplied by the number of program months). The overhead and administration components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate.

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

8. Support of diversity: Preference will be given to proposals that demonstrate efforts to provide for the participation of students with a variety of major disciplines, from diverse regions, and of different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, to the extent feasible for the applicant institutions. The Agency will seek to achieve

maximum geographic diversity in recruitment, selection, and placement of participants through its award of grants.

9. 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. Proposals should include a plan for alumni tracking and coordination that demonstrates the willingness to provide data to and coordinate tracking with USIA and USIS Posts overseas. Due to the reduction in available funds, preference will be given to applicant organizations who can fund alumni activities, with minimal grant funded contributions from the USIA.

10. Project evaluation: Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. 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 intermediate reports after each project component is concluded or quarterly, whichever is less frequent.

Notice

The terms and conditions published in the 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. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

Options for Renewals

Subject to the availability of funding for FY 2000 and the satisfactory performance of grant programs, USIA may invite grantee organizations to submit proposals for renewals of awards for two fiscal year cycles.

Notification

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal USIA procedures.

Dated: November 14, 1997.

Robert L. Earle,

Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

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