

By the Board, David M. Konschnik,  
Director, Office of Proceedings.

**Vernon A. Williams**

Secretary.

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## UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

### College and University Partnerships Program for Russian Regional Investment Initiative in Samara Oblast

**ACTION:** Request for proposals.

**SUMMARY:** The Office of Academic Programs of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award program. Accredited, post-secondary educational institutions meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may apply to develop a partnership with a specified institution of higher education from Russia in specified fields. Non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may also apply to facilitate a partnership between a U.S. college or university with one of the foreign institutions.

USIA seeks proposals from US universities, or NGOs representing US universities, to develop partnerships with one of the two following Russian institutions of higher learning: with the Samara State Aerospace University's International Marketing Institute in the field of public administration; or with the Togliatti Academy of Business and Banking in the field of business education.

Participating institutions exchange faculty and administrators for a combination of teaching, lecturing, faculty and curriculum development, collaborative research, and/or outreach, for periods ranging from one week (for planning visits) to an academic year. The FY 98 program will also support the establishment and maintenance of Internet and/or e-mail communication facilities as well as interactive distance learning programs at foreign partner institutions. Applicants may propose other project activities not listed above that are consistent with the goals and activities of the College and University Partnerships Program.

The program awards up to \$150,000 for a two-year period to defray the cost of travel and per diem with an allowance for educational materials and some aspects of project administration. Grants awarded to organizations with

less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to \$60,000. USIA anticipates awarding two grants in the amount of \$150,000 each.

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." The funding authority for the program cited above is provided through the Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992 (Freedom Support Act). 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 College and University Partnerships Program for Russian Regional Investment Initiative in Samara Oblast and reference number E/ASU-98-09.

**Deadline For Proposals:** All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, DC time on Friday, July 17, 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.

**Approximate program dates:** Grants should begin on or about September 1, 1998.

**Duration:** September 1, 1998-August 30, 2000.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:** Office of Academic Programs; Advising, Teaching, and Specialized Programs Division; Specialized Programs Branch, (E/ASU) room 349, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547, telephone: (202) 619-4126, fax: (202) 401-1433, internet: jcebra@usia.gov to request a Solicitation Package containing more detailed award criteria; all application forms; and 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 Program Officer Jonathan Cebra 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 10 copies of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/ASU-98-09, 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 USIA Moscow for its review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get post's 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 educational 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:

##### Guidelines

The College and University Partnership Program for Russian Regional Investment Initiative in Samara Oblast is limited to the following specific academic disciplines:

(1) Public administration—the Russian partner for this partnership must be Samara State Aerospace University's International Marketing Institute and the focus should be on developing training programs for civil servants;

(2) Business education—the Russian partner for this partnership must be the Togliatti Academy of Business and Banking.

Proposals must focus on curriculum, faculty, and staff development in one of these eligible disciplines. Administrative reform at the Russian partner 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. Feasibility studies to plan partnerships will not be considered.

Whenever feasible, participants should make their training and personnel resources, as well as results of their collaborative research, available to government, NGOs, and business.

Participating institutions should exchange faculty and/or staff members for teaching/lecturing and consulting.

U.S. institutions are responsible for the submission of proposals and should collaborate with their foreign partners in planning and preparing proposals. U.S. and foreign partner institutions are encouraged to consult about the proposed project with USIA E/ASU staff in Washington, DC. Preference will be given to proposals which demonstrate evidence of previous relations with the foreign partner institution(s).

##### Guidelines

###### *U.S. Partner and Participant Eligibility*

In the U.S., participation in the program is open to accredited two- and four-year colleges and universities, including graduate schools. Applications from consortia of U.S. colleges and universities are eligible. Applications from non-profit service and professional organizations or non-governmental organizations proposing to facilitate a partnership between a U.S. university and a foreign partner are also eligible. The lead U.S. institution in the consortium is responsible for submitting the application and each application from a consortium must document the lead school's stated authority to represent the consortium. Participants representing the U.S. institution who are traveling under USIA grant funds must be faculty, staff, or advanced graduate students from the participating institution(s) and must be citizens.

###### *Foreign Partner and Participant Eligibility*

Overseas, participation is limited to the following institutions:

Samara State Aerospace University's International Marketing Institute—in the field of public administration; Togliatti Academy of Business and Banking—in the field of business education.

Participants representing the foreign institutions must be faculty, staff or advanced students of the partner institution, and be citizens, nationals, or permanent residents of the country of the foreign partner, and be qualified to hold a valid passport and U.S. J-1 visa.

###### *Ineligibility*

A proposal will be deemed technically ineligible if:

- (1) It does not fully adhere to the guidelines established herein and in the Solicitation Package;
- (2) It is not received by the deadline;
- (3) It is not submitted by the U.S. partner;
- (4) One of the partner institutions is ineligible;
- (5) The academic discipline(s) is/are not listed as eligible in the RFP, herein;
- (6) The amount requested of USIA exceeds \$150,000 for the two-year project.

Please refer to program-specific guidelines (POGI) in the Solicitation Package for further details.

##### 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. 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 USIA procedures.

Dated: May 14, 1998.

##### Robert L. Earle,

*Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, Notice of Meeting

The Department of Veterans Affairs gives notice under Public Law 92-463 that a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Women Veterans will be held on June 16-19, 1998, at the Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. The purpose of the Committee is to advise the Secretary of Veterans Affairs regarding the needs of women veterans with respect to health care, rehabilitation, compensation, outreach and other programs, and activities administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs designed to meet such needs. The Committee will make recommendations to the Secretary regarding such activities.

On June 16, 17 and 18, the sessions will convene from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on June 19, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The Committee will meet in conference room 230, at VA Central Office. All sessions will be open to the public. It will be necessary for those wishing to attend to contact Ms. Maryanne Carson, Department of Veterans Affairs, Washington, DC (phone 202-273-6193) prior to June 5, 1998. A tentative agenda follows:

#### Tuesday, June 16, 1998

- 9:00 am Introduction of new members—Chair/Vice Chair
- 9:15 am Opening remarks: Secretary Togo D. West, Jr.
- 10:00 am Briefing: Under Secretary for Benefits
- 10:30 am Break