

focused on Religious and Cultural Pluralism in Uzbekistan and the United States. That program will support community exchanges between the United States and Uzbekistan and will support visits by U.S. specialists to Uzbekistan. The Uzbekistani institutions identified for participation in the Uzbekistan Educational Partnerships Program in Cultural and Comparative Religious Studies may be appropriate venues for experts sponsored by the program for Religious and Cultural Pluralism in Uzbekistan and the United States. Therefore the grantees in the two programs for Uzbekistan will be expected to coordinate activities closely with one another to make sure that the activities of the two programs are complementary.

Program Information

Overview: The Uzbekistan Educational Partnerships Program in Cultural and Comparative Religious Studies will fund a three-year project to permit U.S. institutions to work with specified counterpart universities and educational institutions in Uzbekistan. Applicants should propose a creative model for exchange that includes both a strategy for identifying U.S. instructors and scholars to visit the partner institutions in Uzbekistan and a strategy for identifying academic institutions to host exchange participants from Uzbekistan. Pending availability of funds, approximately \$1,000,000 is expected to be available under the FREEDOM Support Act for the Uzbekistan Educational Partnerships Program in Cultural and Comparative Religious Studies in FY 2003.

Objectives: The most competitive proposal should benefit all participants and partner institutions although the benefits do not need to be identical for each partner. The proposal should outline a plan to cooperate with Uzbekistani institutions to: (1) Develop courses and curricula in eligible fields; (2) improve teaching methods; (3) develop educational materials which support new courses and curricula; (4) train teachers or other practitioners in the effective use of these materials; (5) engage in collaborative research and (6) foster self-sustaining relationships with U.S. academic institutions and educators.

The program should equip participating Uzbekistani institutions and educators to provide accurate and balanced information about religions, including Islam, and Uzbekistani cultural history framed within a contemporary understanding of human rights and the role of cultural and religious pluralism in a democratic

society. At the conclusion of the program, teachers at the participating Uzbekistani institutions should be capable of teaching newly introduced or revised courses and should be able to participate more fully in international dialogue with U.S. and other educators. Students graduating from the participating Uzbekistani institutions should have a better understanding of the relationships between religion, politics, and society in modern democracies and should be better prepared to apply this understanding in public service, education, and the private sector, and to contribute to building a democratic society.

The Bureau anticipates that participating U.S. institutions and individuals will benefit by developing or strengthening regional expertise, or by gaining access to new opportunities for archival or library research. Participating U.S. faculty may utilize this experience to develop new courses or incorporate comparative content into existing courses. Students at participating U.S. institutions will gain a better understanding of Central Asia through interaction with visiting scholars and U.S. faculty who have incorporated international content into their courses.

Pending availability of funds, the grant should begin on or about June 15, 2003.

Applicants should propose a multi-institutional plan that includes all of the partners listed below as primary partners:

The Tashkent Islamic University;
The Al-Bukhari Islamic Institute;
The Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences;
The Al-Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences;
The Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies.

Additional institutions may be included as secondary partners. The U.S. Embassy in Tashkent must approve any additional partner institutions.

In order to successfully coordinate the multiple components of this project it will be necessary for the grantee organization to have a field office in Uzbekistan, or to establish one by the time grant activities begin. The grantee will be expected to closely coordinate activities with the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent.

Participant eligibility: All participants traveling to Uzbekistan funded under the grant must be U.S. citizens. Foreign participants must be both qualified to receive U.S. J-1 visas and willing to travel to the U.S. under the provisions of a J-1 visa during the exchange visits funded by this Program.

Programs must comply with J-1 visa regulations. Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

Budget Guidelines: The Bureau anticipates awarding one grant not to exceed \$1,000,000. Applicants may submit a budget not to exceed this amount. Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$60,000 in Bureau funding. The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost-sharing and funding from private sources in support of its programs.

Applicants must submit a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. 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/A/S/U-03-13.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: To request a solicitation package, contact the Humphrey Fellowships and Institutional Linkages Branch; Office of Global Educational Programs; Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs; ECA/A/S/U, Room 349; U.S. Department of State; SA-44, 301 Fourth Street, SW.; Washington, DC 20547; phone: (202) 619-5289, fax: (202) 401-1433. The Solicitation Package includes more detailed award criteria, all application forms, and guidelines for preparing proposals, including specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget. Applicants desiring more information may contact Program Officer Jonathan Cebra at 202-205-8379 or jcebra@pd.state.gov.

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 Web site 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 p.m. Washington, DC time on Tuesday, April 1, 2003. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Documents