

with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

### To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet

Projects must conform with the Bureau's requirements and guidelines outlined in the Solicitation Package for this RFGP. 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. The Solicitation Package includes the Project Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (hereafter, POGI) and the Proposal Submission Instructions (hereafter, PSI). 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 Friday, December 5, 2003. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Documents postmarked the due date but received on a later date will not be accepted. Each applicant must ensure that the proposals are received by the above deadline.

Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The original and 10 copies of the complete application should be sent by the project's lead U.S. college or university to: U.S. Department of State, SA-44, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Ref.: ECA/A/S/U-04-01, Program Management, ECA/EX/PM, Room 534, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547.

### Submission of Electronic Copies

No later than one week after the deadline for receipt of the grant proposal, applicants must also submit the "Proposal Title Page," "Executive Summary," and "Proposal Narrative," sections of the proposal as e-mail attachments in Microsoft Word (preferred), WordPerfect, or as ASCII text files to the following e-mail address: [partnerships@pd.state.gov](mailto:partnerships@pd.state.gov). In the e-mail message subject line, include the following: ECA/A/S/U-04-01 and the country or countries of the foreign partner(s) together with the names of the U.S. and foreign partner institutions. To reduce the time needed to obtain advisory comments from the Public Affairs Sections of U.S. Embassies overseas, the Bureau will transmit these files electronically to these offices.

### Grant Duration

Pending the availability of funds, grant activities should begin on or about September 1, 2004 and may continue for up to three years. Grant activities are expected to be completed within a three-year timeframe.

### 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. Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106-113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

### Adherence to All Regulations Governing the J Visa

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is placing renewed emphasis on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by grantees and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 6Z, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting, and

other requirements. The Grantee will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://exchanges.state.gov> or from:

United States Department of State,  
Office of Exchange Coordination and Designation, ECA/EC/ECD-SA-44,  
Room 734, 301 4th Street, SW.,  
Washington, DC 20547, Telephone:  
(202) 401-9810, Fax: (202) 401-9809.

### Review Process

The Bureau will acknowledge receipt of all proposals and will review them for technical eligibility. All eligible proposals will be evaluated by independent external reviewers. These reviewers, who will be professional, scholarly, or educational experts with appropriate regional and thematic knowledge, will provide recommendations and assessments for consideration by the Bureau. The Bureau will consider for funding only those proposals which are recommended for funding by the independent external reviewers.

Proposals may be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Advisor or by other offices of the U.S. Department of State. In addition, U.S. Embassy officers may provide advisory comment. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (grants) will reside with the Bureau's grants officer.

### Review Criteria

All reviewers will use the criteria below to reach funding recommendations and decisions. Technically eligible applications will be reviewed competitively according to these criteria, which are not rank-ordered or weighted.

(1) *Broad and Enduring Significance of Institutional Objectives:* Project objectives should have significant and ongoing impact on the participating institutions and their surrounding societies, communities, or countries by providing a deepened understanding of critical issues in one or more of the eligible fields. Project objectives should relate clearly to institutional and societal needs.

(2) *Creativity and Feasibility of Strategy to Achieve Project Objectives:* Strategies to achieve project objectives should be feasible and realistic within the projected budget and timeframe. Proposals should contain detailed information on specific program