

DEPARTMENT OF STATE**[Public Notice 4492]****Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Request for Grant Proposals: Educational Advising Program for the Middle East and North Africa**

SUMMARY: The Educational Information and Resources Branch (ECA/A/S/A), Office of Global Educational Programs, of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, announces an open competition for educational advising in the Middle East and North Africa. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 U.S.C. 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to offer overseas educational advising, orientation, and information services for international students and scholars in one or more, up to a total of nine, locations in the Middle East and North Africa.

Program Information

Overview: ECA-supported educational advising offices guide students in their pursuit of educational opportunities in the United States and prepare them for direct exposure to American values, ideas, models, and traditions. They provide up-to-date, unbiased information on the range of accredited U.S. educational institutions and work to build mutual understanding between the United States and other countries through educational exchange.

Department of State-affiliated overseas educational advising services operate in nearly five hundred locations around the world. In the Middle East and North Africa, awards will be made to support advising in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, West Bank/Gaza, and Yemen. Organizations may apply to operate centers in one or more, up to the total of nine, listed locations. If support for more than one center within any particular location is requested, the proposal should provide a rationale.

The advising centers will provide information about study opportunities in the U.S., will offer group informational sessions and individual advising, and will conduct outreach to local institutions. The advising centers will provide accurate information and advising on the following topics: The U.S. education system; U.S. colleges, universities, and other higher education institutions; the application process to a U.S. university; majors and fields of study; testing requirements; life in the U.S.; visa procedures; scholarship programs and financial aid; and pre-departure orientation. Advisers will be

eligible to participate in Department of State-sponsored training opportunities, to receive reference materials for the advising center from the Department of State, and to receive guidance and assistance from the Department of State's Regional Educational Advising Coordinator (REAC) located in Rabat, Morocco.

As potential students from North Africa and the Middle East express uncertainty about whether they are welcome in the U.S. and seriously consider study in other countries that advertise themselves as "safe," student numbers from the region are declining on U.S. campuses. Proposals should describe in detail creative methods for responding to Middle Eastern/North Africa student concerns and for promoting U.S. education during unsettled times.

Guidelines: Grants will begin on January 1, 2004 and end December 31, 2004. Organizations may apply to provide advising services in one or more of the above-listed countries. Educational advising services must be provided on a regularly scheduled basis, open to the public at least 30 hours per week, with additional hours reserved for program development, administrative work, and communications. As the referral service of the U.S. Embassy, the educational advising office serves as the in-country resource on U.S. higher education.

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

Budget Guidelines

To support advising in the region, the program will award a total of up to \$450,000 for all centers for a one-year period. Grants awarded to eligible organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to \$60,000. The Bureau encourages participants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding from private sources in support of its programs.

Applicants must submit a comprehensive budget with a summary budget as well as detail reflecting both administrative and program budgets. If applying for more than one site, applicants should provide separate budgets for each location, as well as identifiable program components and activities. Overhead and indirect costs should not exceed 36% of the amount requested.

Allowable costs include the following:

A. Program costs.

(1) Advisers' salaries and benefits;

(2) Office supplies and expenses, including rent, communications, postage, shipping, utilities;

B. Indirect costs.

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/A-04-08.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Office of Global Educational Programs, Educational Information and Resources Branch, ECA/A/S/A, Room 349, U.S. Department of State, SA-44, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547, phone: (202) 619-5434, fax: (202) 401-1433, e-mail: jfrisbie@pd.state.gov to request a Solicitation Package. The Solicitation Package contains detailed award criteria, required application forms, specific budget instructions, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. Please specify Bureau Program Officer Jean Frisbie on all other inquiries and correspondence.

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.

New OMB Requirement

An OMB policy directive published in the **Federal Register** on Friday, June 27, 2003, requires that all organizations applying for Federal grants or cooperative agreements must provide a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number when applying for all Federal grants or cooperative agreements on or after October 1, 2003. The complete OMB policy directive can be referenced at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/fedreg/062703_grant_identifier.pdf. Please also visit the ECA Web site at <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/rfgps/menu.htm> for additional information on how to comply with this new directive.

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, October 24, 2003.