

the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for cooperative agreements resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

#### 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. *Program Development and Management*: Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, innovation, and relevance to the Bureau's mission.

2. *Program planning*: Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above.

3. *Ability to achieve program objectives*: Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan.

4. *Support of Diversity*: Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Achievable and relevant features should be cited in both program administration and program content.

5. *Institutional Capacity*: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals.

6. *Institution's Record/Ability*: Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau grants as determined by Bureau Grant Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

7. *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.

8. *Cost-effectiveness*: The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as

possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate.

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

10. *Value to U.S.-Partner Country Relations*: Proposed projects should receive positive assessments by the U.S. Department of State's geographic area desk and overseas officers of program need, potential impact, and significance in the partner country(ies).

#### Authority

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 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 above is provided through legislation.

#### Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau 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 Bureau procedures.

Dated: October 6, 2003.

**C. Miller Crouch,**

*Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 4510]

### Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Request for Grant Proposals: Pre-Academic English Language Training and Academic Readiness Phase of the Partnership for Learning Undergraduate Studies PLUS Program

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Office of English Language Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for the Pre-Academic English Language Training and Academic Readiness phase of the ECA Partnership for Learning Undergraduate Studies (PLUS) Program. 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 provide administrative and program support services for placing between 75 and 100 undergraduate students from the Middle East and North Africa in groups of no more than 14 students in appropriate United States Intensive English Programs (IEPs). These IEPs should be associated with U.S. colleges and universities offering a pre-academic program of intensive English language instruction, academic readiness, and acculturation to life and study in the United States. It is anticipated that most of the students will begin their pre-academic programs in January 2004 or the spring semester of the institution's academic calendar.

#### Program Information

*Overview:* The Partnership for Learning Undergraduate Studies (PLUS) Program of the ECA Partnership for Learning Initiative seeks to reach a broad sector of college-age youth (17-22) from diverse backgrounds, provide them with a greater understanding of U.S. institutions, society and culture, and build leadership for the region through education.

The goal of the PLUS scholarship program is to identify and support undergraduate level study at accredited higher education institutions in the United States for a select cadre of academically talented undergraduate students from the Middle East and North Africa who exhibit leadership potential in contributing to the economic, political, and social development of the region.

PLUS scholarships are offered for the final two years of undergraduate level study leading to a bachelor's degree in the social sciences and humanities. When necessary, the program will also