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For more information, see our Web site at <http://www.sba.gov/ombudsman>.

Dated: October 10, 2003.

Peter Sorum,

National Ombudsman (Acting).

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 4517]

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Request for Grant Proposals: Eurasia Professional Exchanges and Training Program for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan

SUMMARY: The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (the Bureau) invites applicants to submit proposals that encourage the growth of democratic institutions in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. For this competition, single country projects only are eligible for support. U.S.-based 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 that support international projects in the United States and overseas involving current or potential leaders.

Important Note: This Request for Grant Proposals contains language in the "Shipment and Deadline for Proposals" section that is significantly different from that used in the past. Please pay special attention to procedural changes as outlined.

Interested applicants should read the complete **Federal Register** announcement before addressing inquiries to the Office of Citizen Exchanges or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Office of Citizen Exchanges staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until after the Bureau program and project review process has been completed.

Announcement Title and Number: All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the "Eurasia Professional Exchanges and Training Program" (PET) and number ECA/PE/C/EUR-04-33.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Interested organizations/institutions may contact the Office of Citizen Exchanges, Room 220, SA-44, U.S. Department of State, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547, Attention: Eurasia Professional Exchanges and Training Program, telephone number (202) 401-6884, fax number (202) 619-4350 to request a Solicitation Package. The Solicitation Package, which includes the Request for Grant Proposals (RFGP), the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) and the diversity statement, contains detailed award criteria, required application forms, specific budget instructions, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

For specific inquiries, please contact Bureau program officers by phone or e-mail: Kendra Davis (202) 619-5328 (kldavis@pd.state.gov); Henry Scott (202) 619-5327 (hscott@pd.state.gov); Michael George (202) 619-5330 (mgeorge@pd.state.gov); Brent Beemer (202) 401-6887 (bbeemer@pd.state.gov). (Note: Please refer to the specific program theme under "Program Information" to identify which program officer you should contact.)

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.

General Program Guidelines: This competition is based on the premise that people-to-people exchanges encourage and strengthen democratic initiatives and nurture the social, political and economic development of societies. Exchanges and training programs supported by institutional grants from the Bureau should operate at two levels: They should enhance institutional partnerships, and they should offer practical information and experience to individuals and groups to assist them with their professional responsibilities. Strong proposals usually have the following characteristics:

- A proven track record of working in the proposed issue area and country;
- Experienced staff with language facility and a commitment by the staff to monitor projects locally to ensure implementation;
- A clear, convincing plan showing how permanent results will be accomplished as a result of the activity funded by the grant; and
- A post-grant plan that includes activities that will take place after the Bureau-funded grant has concluded. (See Review Criterion #5 below for more information on post-grant activities.)

- A detailed assessment of project needs and feasibility. Proposals that include costs or time for a needs assessment may be deemed less competitive.

Applicants should identify the local organizations and individuals in the counterpart country with whom they are proposing to collaborate and describe in detail previous cooperative programming and/or contacts. Specific information about the counterpart organizations' activities and accomplishments should be included in the section under "Institutional Capacity" (See Review Criterion # 2 below). Proposals should contain letters of support tailored to the proposed project from foreign-country partner organizations. Applicants should clearly outline in the narrative the foreign partner's role and responsibilities in project management and implementation.

Proposal narratives must clearly demonstrate an organization's commitment to consult closely with the designated program officer at Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, and with Public Affairs Sections at U.S. Embassies. Proposal narratives must confirm that all materials developed for the project will acknowledge Bureau funding for the program as well as a commitment to invite representatives of the Embassy and/or Consulate to participate in various program sessions/site visits. Please note that this will be a formal requirement in all final grant awards.

Suggested Program Designs

Bureau-supported exchanges may include internships; study tours; short-term, non-technical experiential learning; extended and intensive workshops; and seminars taking place in the United States or overseas. Examples of program activities include:

1. A U.S.-based program that includes: Orientation to program purposes and to U.S. society; study tour/site visits; professional internships/placements; interaction and dialogue; hands-on training; professional development; and action plan development. Proposals that include U.S.-based training will receive the highest priority.
2. Capacity-building/training-of-trainer (TOT) workshops to help participants to identify priorities, create work plans; strengthen professional and volunteer skills; share their experience with committed people within each country; and become active in a practical and valuable way.
3. Site visits by U.S. facilitators/experts to monitor projects in the region