

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

[Public Notice 4516]

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Request for Grant Proposals: Internet Access and Training Program in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Russia

SUMMARY: The Office of Academic Exchange Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for the Internet Access and Training Program (IATP) in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Russia. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) may submit proposals to oversee and carry out IATP operations, including the establishment of new IATP sites, the maintenance and enhancement of existing sites, the development of Internet outreach and educational projects, and engaging ECA alumni and other targeted groups in the IATP. All activities of the IATP will be undertaken in regular and consistent consultation with the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of the U.S. Embassy in each participating country. Applicants may submit proposals to implement the program in only one of the three regions, (Russia, Caucasus, Central Asia) or in two or all three regions. **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.

Program Information*Overview*

The Internet Access and Training Program (IATP) was established in 1995 with funding from the FREEDOM Support Act (FSA) to multiply the U.S. Government's investment in exchanges by supporting and maintaining contact with the over 100,000 Eurasian alumni of U.S. Government-funded programs through a network of public Internet access sites in twelve countries of Eurasia. IATP centers extend the exchange experience and expand avenues of mutual understanding by continuing to engage alumni and other targeted groups in U.S. based programs and dialogues. In Eurasia, where Internet access and freedom of information is often restricted by economic and political factors, IATP public access Internet sites allow USG exchange alumni to maintain contact with their host institutions and colleagues in the United States and

across their home region, as well as with U.S. government officials and U.S. exchange NGOs, while maintaining access to world wide information centers. They also serve as catalysts for alumni action by furthering the ability of alumni to introduce American values and practices into their home societies. The IATP centers train alumni in practical and meaningful uses of the Internet, including how to create a website, how to design distance learning courses, publish journals and use databases. Exchange alumni also design courses and lead training sessions at the centers to transfer their knowledge and skills to their home communities. IATP sites are most often located at public libraries and at universities that provide unrestricted access to USG exchange alumni and other key individuals, such as educators, NGO staff members and journalists.

The main components of this program for which grant funding is provided are:

1. Enhancement of existing IATP sites.
2. Maintenance of existing IATP sites.
3. Establishment of new IATP sites.
4. Outreach and educational activities at IATP sites.
5. Monitoring of IATP activities.
6. Evaluation of IATP activities, including the sustainability of open access to information and Internet training.

Subject to the availability of funds, it is anticipated that the grants will begin on or about May 1, 2004. The grant period should be fifteen to twenty-four months. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for further information.

Budget Guidelines

All organizations applying under this competition must demonstrate in their proposal narrative a minimum of four years experience managing and conducting international exchange programs. Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience managing and conducting international exchange programs be limited to \$60,000. Since the grant or grants under the competition will exceed the \$60,000 ceiling, organizations with less than four years experience, per above, are not eligible to apply under this competition.

Applicants must submit a comprehensive budget for each program. ECA anticipates awarding \$4,795,000 (\$340,000 in Armenia, \$420,000 in Azerbaijan, \$345,000 in Georgia in the Caucasus; \$380,000 in Kazakhstan, \$345,000 in Kyrgyzstan, \$445,000 in Tajikistan, \$150,000 in Turkmenistan, \$380,000 in Uzbekistan in Central Asia; \$1,990,000 in Russia) to

support the program and administrative costs required to implement this program. ECA encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding from private sources in support of its programs. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

Announcement Title and Number

All correspondence with ECA concerning this RFPG should reference the above title and number *ECA/A/E/EUR-04-04*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The Office of Academic Exchanges, ECA/A/E/EUR, Room 246, SA-44, U.S. Department of State, 301 4th Street, SW., Washington, DC 20547, tel. (202) 205-0525, fax (202) 260-7985, exchanges@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 ECA Senior Program Manager Ilo-Mai Harding on all other inquiries and correspondence.

Please read the complete **Federal Register** announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFPG deadline has passed, Department of State staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

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 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.

To Download a Solicitation Package via Internet

The Solicitation Package may be downloaded from ECA's Web site at