

the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other elements of the Department or the United States Government. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for grants 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) *Broad and Enduring Significance of Institutional Objectives:* Program objectives should have significant and ongoing benefits for the participating institutions and for their surrounding societies or communities.

(2) *Creativity and Feasibility of Strategy to Achieve Objectives:* Strategies to achieve program objectives should be feasible and realistic within the budget and timeframe. These strategies should utilize and reinforce exchange activities creatively to ensure an efficient use of program resources.

(3) *Multiplier effect/impact:* Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages.

(4) *Support of Diversity:* Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity by explaining how issues of diversity are included in objectives for all institutional partners. Issues resulting from differences of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, geography, socio-economic status, or physical challenge should be addressed during program implementation. In addition, program participants and administrators should reflect the diversity within the societies which they represent (see the section of this document on "Diversity, Freedom, and Democracy Guidelines"). Proposals should also discuss how the various institutional partners approach diversity issues in their respective communities or societies.

(5) *Institution's Capacity and Record/Ability:* Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. 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.

(6) *Evaluation:* Proposals should outline a methodology for determining the degree to which the project meets its objectives, both while it is underway and at its conclusion. The final program evaluation should include an external component and should provide observations about the program's influence within the participating institutions as well as their surrounding communities or societies.

(7) *Cost-effectiveness:* Administrative and program costs should be reasonable and appropriate with cost-sharing provided by all participating institutions within the context of their respective capacities. Cost-sharing is viewed as a reflection of institutional commitment to the program.

(8) *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 Kyrgyz Republic.

Authority

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Pub. L. 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 cited above is provided through the Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets Support Act of 1992 (FREEDOM Support Act).

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: January 28, 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 4273]

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Request for Grant Proposals (RFGPs) for the Project "Cultural and Religious Pluralism in Uzbekistan and the United States"

SUMMARY: The Europe/Eurasia Division of the Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for the project, Cultural and Religious Pluralism in Uzbekistan and the United States. 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 conduct a two-component exchange program with Uzbekistan. The first component of the program is for 60 community and religious leaders from Uzbekistan to travel to host communities in the United States for a program on cultural and religious pluralism. The second component is the recruitment of 16 experts on religion and the role of religion in American society who will travel to Uzbekistan to conduct lectures and training programs.

Program Information

Organizations must have four or more years of documented experience in conducting international exchange to be eligible to apply for a grant under this competition.

Overview: The Office of Citizen Exchanges consults with and supports American public and private nonprofit organizations in developing and implementing multi-phased, often multi-year, exchanges of professionals,