

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.

Shipment and Deadline for Proposals

IMPORTANT NOTE: The deadline for this competition is Friday, January 16, 2004. In light of recent events and heightened security measures, proposal submissions must be sent via a nationally recognized overnight delivery service (*i.e.*, DHL, Federal Express, UPS, Airborne Express, or U.S. Postal Service Express Overnight Mail, etc.) and be shipped no later than the above deadline. The delivery services used by applicants must have in-place, centralized shipping identification and tracking systems that may be accessed via the Internet and delivery people who are identifiable by commonly recognized uniforms and delivery vehicles. It is each applicant's responsibility to ensure that each package is marked with a legible tracking number and to monitor/confirm delivery via the Internet. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time.

Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The original and eight copies of the application should be sent to:

U.S. Department of State, SA-44,
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs,
Ref.: ECA/A/S/U-04-05,
Program Management, ECA/EX/PM,
Room 534, 301 4th Street, SW,
Washington, DC 20547.

Applicants must also submit the "Executive Summary" and "Proposal Narrative" sections of the proposal on a 3.5" diskette, formatted for DOS. These documents must be provided in ASCII text (DOS) format with a maximum line length of 65 characters. The Bureau will transmit these files electronically to the Public Affairs section at the U.S. Embassy for its review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get embassy comments for the Bureau's grants review process.

Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a

non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including, but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and physical challenges. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support for Diversity' section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal. Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106-113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

Adherence to All Regulations Governing the J Visa

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is placing renewed emphasis on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by grantees and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements. The Grantee will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program. A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://exchanges.state.gov> or from: United States Department of State, Office of Exchange Coordination and Designation, ECA/EC/ECD-SA-44, Room 734, 301 4th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20547, Telephone: (202) 401-9810, FAX: (202) 401-9809.

Review Process

The Bureau will acknowledge receipt of all proposals and will review them for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. The program office, as well as the Public Affairs Section overseas, where appropriate will review all eligible proposals. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of Bureau officers for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (grants or 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. *Quality of the program idea:* Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission and responsiveness to the objectives and guidelines stated in this solicitation. Proposals should demonstrate substantive expertise in curriculum development, elementary education and teacher training.

2. *Creativity and feasibility of program plan:* A detailed agenda and a relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertaking, logistical capacity, and a creative utilization of resources and of relevant professional development opportunities. The agenda and work plan should be consistent with the program overview and project design that are outlined in this solicitation.

3. *Ability to achieve project objectives:* Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. Proposals should demonstrate an understanding of educational issues in Azerbaijan.

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 program design and implementation. Achievable and relevant features should be cited in both program administration (selection of participants, program venue and