

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 Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division of ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program for obtaining J-1 visas.

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. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by 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 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) 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:* The proposed program should be well developed, respond to design outlined in the solicitation, and demonstrate originality. It should be clearly and accurately written, substantive, and with sufficient detail. Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission.

2. *Program planning:* A detailed agenda and work plan should clearly demonstrate how project objectives will be achieved. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview

and guidelines described above. The substance of workshops, seminars, presentations, school-based activities, and/or site visits should be described in detail.

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

4. *Support of diversity:* The proposal should demonstrate the recipient's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity in program content. Applicants should demonstrate readiness to accommodate participants with physical disabilities.

5. *Institutional capacity and track record:* Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals. The proposal should demonstrate an institutional record, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Bureau grants as determined by the Bureau's Office of Contracts. The Bureau will consider the past performance.

6. *Cross-cultural sensitivity and area expertise:* Applicants must demonstrate their understanding of the area in which they propose to work and should demonstrate sensitivity to participants' values, customs, and life experiences in the programming.

7. *Follow-on activities:* Proposals should provide a plan for a Bureau-supported follow-on visit by project staff to the relevant country or region, plus a plan for continued follow-on activity, not necessarily with Bureau support, that insures that this program is not an isolated event.

8. *Project evaluation:* The proposal should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The proposal should include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The grant recipient will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded.

9. *Cost-effectiveness and cost sharing:* The applicant should demonstrate efficient use of Bureau funds. 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. The proposal should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector

support as well as institutional direct funding contributions, which demonstrates institutional and community commitment.

10. *Value to U.S.-Partner Country Relations:* The proposed project 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.

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. The funding authority for the Serbia and Southeast Europe projects is provided through Support for East European Democracy (SEED) 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: February 14, 2003.

Patricia S. Harrison,

Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State.

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