

0001, and (2) Joseph D. Anthofer, 1416 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68179-0830.

Persons seeking further information concerning abandonment procedures may contact the Board's Office of Public Services at (202) 565-1592 or refer to the full abandonment or discontinuance regulations at 49 CFR part 1152.

Questions concerning environmental issues may be directed to the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis at (202) 565-1545. [TDD for the hearing impaired is available at (202) 565-1695.]

An environmental assessment (EA) (or environmental impact statement (EIS), if necessary) prepared by the Section of Environmental Analysis will be served upon all parties of record and upon any agencies or other persons who commented during its preparation. Any other persons who would like to obtain a copy of the EA (or EIS) may contact the Section of Environmental Analysis. EAs in these abandonment proceedings normally will be available within 60 days of the filing of the petition. The deadline for submission of comments on the EA will generally be within 30 days of its service.

Decided: June 17, 1997.

By the Board, Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-16767 Filed 6-25-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Surface Transportation Board

[STB Docket No. AB-33 (Sub-No. 111X)]

Union Pacific Railroad Company— Abandonment Exemption—in Jefferson County, WI

Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) has filed a notice of exemption under 49 CFR 1152 Subpart F—Exempt Abandonments and Discontinuances of Service and Trackage Rights to abandon and discontinue service over 2.0 miles of the Clyman Branch extending from the end of the line at milepost 110.0 to milepost 112.0, near Fort Atkinson, in Jefferson County, WI. The line traverses United States Postal Service Zip Code 53538.

UP has certified that: (1) no local traffic has moved over the line for at least 2 years; (2) any overhead traffic can be rerouted over other lines; (3) no formal complaint filed by a user of rail service on the line (or by a state or local government entity acting on behalf of such user) regarding cessation of service over the line either is pending with the

Surface Transportation Board (Board) or with any U.S. District Court or has been decided in favor of complainant within the 2-year period; and (4) the requirements of 49 CFR 1105.7 (environmental reports), 49 CFR 1105.8 (historic reports), 49 CFR 1105.11 (transmittal letter), 49 CFR 1105.12 (newspaper publication), and 49 CFR 1152.50(d)(1) (notice to governmental agencies) have been met.

As a condition to this exemption, any employee adversely affected by the abandonment shall be protected under Oregon Short Line R. Co.—

Abandonment—Goshen, 360 I.C.C. 91 (1979). To address whether this condition adequately protects affected employees, a petition for partial revocation under 49 U.S.C. 10502(d) must be filed.

Provided no formal expression of intent to file an offer of financial assistance (OFA) has been received, this exemption will be effective on July 26, 1997, unless stayed pending reconsideration. Petitions to stay that do not involve environmental issues,¹ formal expressions of intent to file an OFA under 49 CFR 1152.27(c)(2),² and trail use/rail banking requests under 49 CFR 1152.29³ must be filed by July 7, 1997. Petitions to reopen or requests for public use conditions under 49 CFR 1152.28 must be filed by July 16, 1997, with: Surface Transportation Board, Office of the Secretary, Case Control Unit, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423.

A copy of any petition filed with the Board should be sent to applicant's representative: Joseph D. Anthofer, General Attorney, Union Pacific Railroad Company, 1416 Dodge Street, Room 830, Omaha, NE 68179.

If the verified notice contains false or misleading information, the exemption is void ab initio.

UP has filed an environmental report which addresses the abandonment's effects, if any, on the environment and historic resources. The Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) will issue an environmental assessment (EA)

¹ The Board will grant a stay if an informed decision on environmental issues (whether raised by a party or by the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis in its independent investigation) cannot be made before the exemption's effective date. See Exemption of Out-of-Service Rail Lines, 5 I.C.C. 2d 377 (1989) Any request for a stay should be filed as soon as possible so that the Board may take appropriate action before the exemption's effective date.

² Each offer of financial assistance must be accompanied by the filing fee, which currently is set at \$900. See 49 CFR 1002.2(f)(25)

³ The Board will accept late-filed trail use requests as long as the abandonment has not been consummated and the abandoning railroad is willing to negotiate an agreement.

by July 1, 1997. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA by writing to SEA (Room 500, Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423) or by calling SEA, at (202) 565-1545.

Comments on environmental and historic preservation matters must be filed within 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public.

Environmental, historic preservation, public use, or trail use/rail banking conditions will be imposed, where appropriate, in a subsequent decision.

Pursuant to the provisions of 49 CFR 1152.29(e)(2), UP shall file a notice of consummation with the Board to signify that it has exercised the authority granted and fully abandoned the line. If consummation has not been effected by UP's filing of a notice of consummation by June 26, 1998, and there are no legal or regulatory barriers to consummation, the authority to abandon will automatically expire.

Decided: June 18, 1997.

By the Board, David M. Konschnik,
Director, Office of Proceedings.

Vernon A. Williams,
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-16768 Filed 6-25-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4915-00-P

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

International Education and Cultural Activities; Open Grant Program

ACTION: Notice; Request for proposals.

SUMMARY: The Office of Citizen Exchanges (E/P) of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award program. Public or private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c) may apply to develop projects that link their international exchange interests with counterpart institutions/groups in ways supportive of the aims of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, as amended, Public Law 87-256, 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." Programs and projects must conform with Agency requirements and guidelines outlined in the Application Package. USIA projects and programs are subject to the availability of funds.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT NAME AND NUMBER: All communications concerning this announcement should refer to the Annual Open Grant Program. The announcement number is E/P-98-2. Please refer to title and number in all correspondence or telephone calls to USIA.

Deadline for Proposals: All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on Friday, October 10, 1997. Faxed documents will not be accepted at any time. Documents postmarked by the due date but received at a later date will not be accepted. It is the responsibility of each grant applicant to ensure that proposals are received by the above deadline. This action is effective from the publication date of this notice through October 10, 1997, for projects where activities will begin between January 1, 1998 and December 31, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Interested organizations/institutions must contact the Office of Citizen Exchanges, E/PL, Room 216, United States Information Agency, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547, (202) 619-5326, to request detailed application packets which include award criteria; all application forms; and guidelines for preparing proposals, including specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget. Please direct inquiries and correspondence to *Charlene Toles*, E-Mail (CToles@USIA.GOV).

TO DOWNLOAD A SOLICITATION PACKAGE VIA INTERNET: The Solicitation Package may be downloaded from USIA's website at <http://www.usia.gov/education/rfps>. Please read all information before beginning to download.

ADDRESSES: Applicants must follow all instructions given in the Application Package and send only complete applications with 15 copies to: U.S. Information Agency, REF: E/P-98-2 Annual Open Grant Competition, Grants Management Division (E/XE), 301-4th Street, S.W., Room 336, Washington, D.C. 20547.

Applicants must also submit to E/XE the "Executive Summary" and "Narrative" sections of each proposal on a 3.5" diskette, formatted for DOS. This material must be provided in ASCII text (DOS) format with a maximum line length of 65 characters. USIA will transmit these files electronically to USIS posts overseas for their review, with the goal of reducing the time it takes to get posts' comments for the Agency'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," USIA "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Proposals should account for advancement of this goal in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

Overview

The Office of Citizen Exchanges works with U.S. private sector, non-profit organizations on cooperative international group projects that introduce American and foreign participants to each others' social, economic, and political structures, and international interests. The Office supports international projects in the United States or overseas involving leaders or potential leaders in the

following fields and professions: urban planners, jurists, specialized journalists (specialists in economics, business, political analysis, international affairs), business professionals, NGO leaders, environmental specialists, parliamentarians, educators, economists, and other government officials.

Guidelines

Applicants should carefully note the following restrictions/recommendations for proposals in specific geographical areas:

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Newly Independent States (NIS): Requests for proposals involving the following countries will be announced in separate competitions: CEE—Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, and Slovenia; NIS—Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Proposals involving these regions will not be accepted under this competition.

Western Europe and Canada (WEU): Request for proposals involving Western Europe and Canada will be announced in a separate competition. Proposals involving these regions will not be accepted under this competition.

East Asia and the Pacific (EA): Priority consideration will be given to the following themes and target countries/subregions.

Defense Writers' Seminar on East Asian Security (DW-SEAS) (regional project, including participants from Australia, Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and/or Vietnam—This project would bring senior editors and writers covering security issues to USCINCPAC to Hawaii, to Washington and to an Asian country where U.S. defense forces are forward-deployed for an in-depth review of current security issues and the role that the U.S. plays in ensuring regional stability.

Trade, Investment and Intellectual Property Rights (single-country or multi-country project involving Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and/or Vietnam—This project should focus on the vital role that observance of intellectual property rights protection, open access to business information, transparency in public administration and observance of the rule of law can play in encouraging foreign investment, increased trade and access to technology. Projects in China

should focus on ICR and the role of trade associations in advancing industry interests; projects elsewhere could pair decision-makers from an ASIAN "tiger" economy (such as the Philippines, Malaysia or Thailand) with economic leaders from a country in transition (such as Cambodia, Laos or Vietnam).

The Administration of Justice and Rule of Law (multi-country or single-country project involving China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, the Philippines and/or Vietnam)—This project would help senior judges and legal experts develop a better understanding of how Federal and state judicial systems interact in the U.S. and how transparency, judicial integrity and independence help foster a climate that encourages business confidence.

Building Democracy at the Local Level (single-country or multi-country project involving Korea, Japan, Mongolia and/or the Philippines)—Projects should address the decentralized nature of American politics at the local level and the important role that non-governmental organizations, citizen's groups and grassroots institutions can play in a democracy. Participants could include community leaders from government, business, the media and NGOs; emphasis should be placed on the management of grassroots organizations and strategies to help make them more self-sustaining.

Asian Environments in Transition (multi-country project including Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and/or Vietnam)—As nations in East Asia move from largely agrarian to industrialized economies, the potential for ecological disaster intensifies. Participants in this exchange would include government officials and NGO leaders who are responsible for meeting the needs of an increasingly urban population, while trying to preserve biodiversity and a healthy environment. E/P contact for EA programs: Steve Koenig, 202/260-5485; E-Mail (Skoenig@USIA.GOV)

American Republics (AR): Only those proposals will be considered that evidence the applicant's substantial knowledge of both the proposed theme and the country/countries where the project is to take place. Preference will be given to proposals on the following themes and for the following eligible countries.

Civic Education—Proposals should focus on curriculum development and educational reform in the field of education for democracy. Projects must have as their ultimate goal the development or improvement of school curricula that prepare pupils for active

and responsible citizenship. Eligible countries: Mexico, Chile, Argentina; the Andean Region (proposals should include two or more of the following countries: Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela); Central America (proposals should include at least two of the following countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama); and the Caribbean Region (Haiti and/or the Dominican Republic).

Democratic Institution Building—Priority will be given to proposals that focus on ethics in government/good governance/the fight against corruption. Other topics that will be considered are: human rights; grassroot democracy and citizen participation; women and leadership. Projects must have as their principal objective the strengthening of local institutions that promote these topics. Eligible countries: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay.

Rule of Law—Proposal should focus on the administration of justice, judicial reform, or alternative dispute resolution.

Eligible countries: Brazil; Central America (proposals should include at least two of the following countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama); the Caribbean Region (Haiti and/or the Dominican Republic). E/P contact for AR programs: Laverne Johnson, 202/619-5337; E-Mail (LJohnson@USIA.GOV)

Africa (AF): Proposals are requested for projects in the following thematic categories:

Trade and Investment—Proposals should foster an understanding of and commitment to policies and practices that support economic growth through the private sector and international trade. Preference will be given to projects that focus on creating an "enabling environment" supportive of these goals. Issues covered might include intellectual property rights, trade liberalization (e.g., tax and investment laws, along with other incentives), mechanisms of transparency and accountability, the role of business associations, and regional economic cooperation/integration.

Democratic Governance—Proposals should work to strengthen institutions of government whose work has a direct impact on the quality of a country's democracy. Examples of high-priority topics would be parliamentary administration; local government administration and/or decentralization; the administration of justice and rule of law; alternate dispute resolution; and protection of human rights.

Citizen Participation—Proposals should encourage the effective engagement of citizens in their country's political life. This could be done through projects that focus on organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, whose aim is to educate citizens about their democratic rights and responsibilities (civic education), or through projects that explore the important role played by key institutions of civil society, such as citizen's (e.g. women's) groups, grassroots/community organizations, professional associations, and non-governmental organizations generally.

Electronic Connectivity—Proposals should promote information sharing and network building between Americans and Africans as well as among Africans themselves. Preference will be given to projects that address the three thematic categories listed above. African participants might include government institutions (e.g., parliaments or trade policy departments within ministries); educational institutions; professional associations (e.g., bar, business, or journalism associations); and civic organizations (e.g., human rights or environmental groups). USIA funds may not be used for the purchase of equipment. Proposals must demonstrate a commitment to use and a capacity to maintain the necessary equipment.

Other themes may be proposed, but strong preference will be given to proposals that follow the guidelines above, and to proposals that include programming in at least three countries.

E/P contact for AF programs: Stephen Taylor, 202/205-0535; E-Mail (STaylor@USIA.GOV)

Near East, North Africa and South Asia (NEA): Proposals which respond to the following suggested themes and organizational approaches will receive priority consideration in the awarding of grants for exchange activity in the Near East, North Africa, and South Asia. While not all countries suggested as participants for each project must be included in the exchange, projects which bring together representatives from three or more countries will be given preference.

Urban Environment (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal)—The quality of life in urban areas throughout South Asia is deteriorating rapidly due to unchecked population growth, the byproducts of industrialization, and unprecedented—and unsatisfiable—demands on social infrastructure and natural resources. This undermines the viability of South Asia's cities both as places to live and as commercial centers. A project is needed which will bring together community activities, city

officials, and industry and business representatives to address such urban environmental issues as the need for clean air, clean water, effective waste management, and recycling. The public and the private sectors should be mobilized to cooperate in practicing environmental stewardship while supporting sustainable development, thereby creating a more hospitable environment for human habitation and for regional and international trade and investment.

Strengthening of Non-governmental Organizations (Syria, Jordan, Oman, Qatar, Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, the Palestinian Authority)—Non-governmental organizations are an increasingly important catalyst for change in the Arab world. A project is needed to strengthen the ability of these organizations to mobilize support, organize, develop mutually reinforcing networks, strengthen the concept of voluntarism, and develop democratic methods of operation. Primary themes are those of political and social participation, professional development, and skills enhancement.

Reinventing Government (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal)—Worldwide, many governments have become dysfunctionally cumbersome, bureaucratic, and unresponsive to the public. The project should stress practical and practicable approaches to streamlining government and increasing government's accountability, transparency, and responsiveness to the public. American federal, state, and local government "success stories"—particularly those that feature public/private sector partnerships/collaboration—might be utilized both as case studies for workshops and as internship sites. Participants might include higher level civil servants (focus on short-term reforms) and educators (focusing on longer-term programs for training future public servants).

Young Journalists (Israel, Jordan, Egypt, the Palestinian Authority, Tunisia, Morocco)—There is a need for young journalists in the Middle East and North Africa to focus more on—and improve the objectivity and the quality of—their investigative journalism and their writing about regional issues and a need for such journalists to develop cross-border professional relationships.

Public Administration/Management (UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia)—Growing internet and satellite connectivity and the complexities inherent in the post-petroleum era global marketplace are inevitably challenging traditional public administration practices in the Gulf. The grantee organization will work with

government officials and educators to examine, adapt, and/or develop new public sector management techniques, organizational structures, and market incentives applicable to the region.

Business and the Arts (Syria, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority)—The arts serve as a major means of communication and cultural integration in many countries of the region. Stereotypes and communication barriers among diverse communities may be broken down through the creative use of the arts and the involvement of (for example) young people working together to understand the issues that separate—and unite—them. The grantee will, using examples from American society, demonstrate the value of effective partnerships among community activists, the private business sector, and cultural institutions in developing a cooperative, artistic medium of expression through which community differences can be examined and understanding enhanced. Participants might include businessmen involved in community outreach and local artists' associations.

Eco-tourism (Israel, Jordan, Egypt, the Palestinian Authority, Tunisia, Morocco)—There is a need for enhanced public/private sector cooperation in promoting national and regional tourism (supporting local and regional economic development and expansion) while concomitantly safeguarding and preserving natural and historical sites. The American grantee could develop a series of workshops highlighting U.S. public/NGO partnerships in promoting tourism while conserving natural areas. Selected participants might travel to the United States and work with each other and their American counterparts in learning about and developing strategies to promote eco-tourism.

E/P contact for NEA programs: Tom Johnston, 202/619-5325; E-Mail (TJohnston@USIA.GOV)

The Office of Citizen Exchanges strongly encourages the coordination of activities with respected universities, professional associations, and major cultural institutions in the U.S. and abroad, but particularly in the U.S. Projects should be intellectual and cultural, not technical. Vocational training (an occupation other than one requiring a baccalaureate or higher academic degree; i.e., clerical work, auto maintenance, etc., and other occupations requiring less than two years of higher education) and technical training (special and practical knowledge of a mechanical or a scientific subject which enhances mechanical, narrowly scientific, or semi-skilled capabilities) are ineligible

for support. In addition, scholarship programs are ineligible for support.

The Office does not support proposals limited to conferences or seminars (i.e., one to fourteen-day programs with plenary sessions, main speakers, panels, and a passive audience). It will support conferences only insofar as they are part of a larger project in duration and scope which is receiving USIA funding from this competition. USIA-supported projects may include internships; study tours; short-term, non-technical training; and extended, intensive workshops taking place in the United States or overseas. The themes addressed in exchange programs must be of long-term importance rather than focused exclusively on current events or short-term issues. In every case, a substantial rationale must be presented as part of the proposal, one that clearly indicates the distinctive and important contribution of the overall project, including, where applicable, the expected yield of any associated conference. No funding is available exclusively to sent U.S. citizens to conferences or conference-type seminars overseas; nor is funding available for bringing foreign nationals to conferences or to routine professional association meetings in the United States. Projects that duplicate what is routinely carried out by private sector and/or public sector operations will not be considered. The Office of Citizen Exchanges strongly recommends that applicants consult with host country USIS posts *prior* to submitting proposals.

Selection of Participants

All grant proposals should clearly describe the type of persons who will participate in the program as well as the process by which participants will be selected. It is recommended that programs in support of U.S. internships include letters tentatively committing host institutions to support the internships. In the selection of foreign participants, USIA and USIS posts abroad retain the right to nominate all participants and to accept or deny participants recommended by grantee institutions. However, grantee institutions are often asked by USIA to suggest names of potential participants. The grantee institution will also provide the names of American participants and brief (two pages) biographical data on each American participant to the Office of Citizen Exchanges for information purposes. Priority will be given to foreign participants who have not previously travelled to the United States.

Additional Guidance

The Office of Citizen Exchanges offers the following additional guidance to prospective applicants:

1. The Office of Citizen Exchanges encourages project proposals involving more than one country. Pertinent rationale which links countries in multi-country projects should be included in the submission. Single-country projects that are clearly defined and possess the potential for creating and strengthening continuing linkages between foreign and U.S. institutions are also welcome.

2. Proposals for bilateral programs are subject to review and comment by the USIS post in the relevant country, and pre-selected participants will also be subject to USIS post review.

3. Bilateral programs should clearly identify the counterpart organization and provide evidence of the organization's participation.

4. The Office of Citizen Exchanges will consider proposals for activities which take place exclusively in other countries when USIS posts are consulted in the design of the proposed program and in the choice of the most suitable venues for such programs.

5. Office of Citizen Exchanges grants are not given to support projects whose focus is limited to technical or vocational subjects, or for research projects, for publications funding, for student and/or teacher/faculty exchanges, for sports and/or sports related programs. Nor does this office provide scholarships or support for long-term (a semester or more) academic studies. Competitions sponsored by other Bureau offices are also announced in the **Federal Register**.

For projects that would begin after December 21, 1998, competition details will be announced in the **Federal Register** on or about June 1, 1998. Inquiries concerning technical requirements are welcome prior to submission of applications.

Funding

Although no set funding limit exists, proposals for less than \$135,000 will receive preference. Organizations with less than four years of successful experience in managing international exchange programs are limited to \$60,000. Applicants are invited to provide both an all-inclusive budget as well as separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity in order to facilitate USIA decisions on funding. While an all-inclusive budget must be provided with each proposal, separate component budgets are optional. Competition for USIA funding support is keen.

The selection of grantee institutions will depend on program substance, cross-cultural sensitivity, and ability to carry out the program successfully. Since USIA grant assistance constitutes only a portion of total project funding, proposals should list and provide evidence of other anticipated sources of financial and in-kind support. Proposals with substantial private sector support from foundations, corporations, other institutions, et al. will be deemed highly competitive. The Recipient must provide a minimum of 33 percent cost sharing of the total project cost.

The following project costs are eligible for consideration for funding:

1. International and domestic air fares; visas; transit costs; ground transportation costs.

2. Per Diem. For the U.S. program, organizations have the option of using a flat \$140/day for program participants or the published U.S. Federal per diem rates for individual American cities. For activities outside the U.S., the published Federal per diem rates must be used. **NOTE:** U.S. escorting staff must use the published Federal per diem rates, not the flat rate. Per diem rates may be accessed at (www.usia.gov/agency/ebur-ref.html).

3. Interpreters: If needed, interpreters for the U.S. program are provided by the U.S. State Department Language Services Division. Typically, a pair of simultaneous interpreters is provided for every four visitors who need interpretation. USIA grants do not pay for foreign interpreters to accompany delegations from their home country. Grant proposal budgets should contain a flat \$140/day per diem for each Department of State interpreter, as well as home-program-home air transportation of \$400 per interpreter plus any U.S. travel expenses during the program. Salary expenses are covered centrally and should not be part of an applicant's proposed budget.

4. Book and cultural allowance: Participants are entitled to and escorts are reimbursed a one-time cultural allowance of \$150 per person, plus a participant book allowance of \$50. U.S. staff do not get these benefits.

5. Consultants. May be used to provide specialized expertise or to make presentation. Daily honoraria generally do not exceed \$250 per day. Subcontracting organizations may also be used, in which case the written agreement between the prospective grantee and subcontractor should be included in the proposal.

6. Room rental, which generally should not exceed \$250 per day.

7. Materials development. Proposals may contain costs to purchase, develop, and translate materials for participants.

8. One working meal per project. Per capita costs may not exceed \$5–8 for a lunch and \$14–20 for a dinner, excluding room rental. The number of invited guests may not exceed participants by more than a factor of two-to-one.

9. A return travel allowance of \$70 for each participant which is to be used for incidental expenditures incurred during international travel.

10. All USIA-funded delegates will be covered under the terms of a USIA-sponsored health insurance policy. The premium is paid by USIA directly to the insurance company.

11. Other costs necessary for the effective administration of the program, including salaries for grant organization employees, benefits, and other direct and indirect costs per detailed instructions in the application package.

Note: the 20 percent limitation of "administration costs" included in previous announcements does not apply to the RFP. Please refer to the Application Package for complete budget guidelines.

Review Process

USIA 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 established herein and in the Application Packet. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of USIA officers for advisory review. All eligible proposals will also be reviewed by the program office, as well as the USIA geographic regional office and the USIS post overseas, where appropriate. Proposals may also be reviewed by the USIA's Office of General Counsel or by other Agency elements. Funding decisions are at the discretion of the USIA Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards (grants or cooperative agreements) resides with USIA's grants officer.

Review Criteria

USIA will consider proposals based on their conformance with the objectives and considerations already stated in this RFP, as well as the following criteria:

1. *Quality of Program Idea:* Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Agency mission.

2. *Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Program Objectives:* Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should

demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described below. Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program objectives and plan.

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 the substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Achievement and relevant features should be cited in both program administration (selection of participants, program venue, and program evaluation) and program content (orientation and wrap-up sessions, program meetings, resource materials, and follow-up activities).

5. *Institutional Capacity/Reputation/Ability*: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program's or project's goal. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs,

including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Agency grants as determined by USIA's Office of Contracts. The Agency will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.

6. *Follow-on Activities*: Proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without USIA support) which ensures that USIA-supported programs are not isolated events.

7. *Evaluation Plan*: Proposals should provide a plan for a thorough and objective evaluation of the program/project by the grantee institution.

8. *Cost-Effectiveness/Cost Sharing*: 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. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any USIA representative.

Explanatory information provided by USIA that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Agency reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the need of the program and the availability of funds. Organizations will be expected to cooperate with USIA in evaluating their programs under the principles of the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, which requires federal agencies to measure and report on the results of their programs and activities.

Notification

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been fully appropriated by the Congress, allocated, and committed through internal USIA procedures. Awarded grants will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

Dated: June 20, 1997.

Dell Pendergrast,

Deputy Director for the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

[FR Doc. 97-16646 Filed 6-25-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M