

Proposals should make an effort to incorporate other types of diversity into various proposal elements and activities, including program staff, consultants and resource people, programmatic locations, program participants, materials and resources developed, collaborative programming, etc.

Overview

Background

For several years USIA's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs has actively promoted the concept of diversity, making a concerted effort to increase the number of people from underrepresented audiences participating in its exchanges and other programming. This clearly has included outreach to the disability community. Simultaneously, the U.S. Congress has encouraged USIA to focus even more on people with disabilities and on disability-related matters. In FY 1995 the Congress appropriated funds to USIA for the purpose of making an award to a private non-profit organization to establish and manage a disability exchanges clearinghouse.

Special Note

In making this award and establishing the disability exchanges clearinghouse, funding priority will be given to entities that are operated by people with disabilities and knowledgeable about the operation and development of exchange programs for those with disabilities, and which have been involved for at least ten years in integrating persons with disabilities into such programs.

Objectives

The short term objectives in making an award to establish a disability exchanges clearinghouse are to develop a set of programs, products, and services that will: (1) provide information for the disability community at all levels about the various publicly-sponsored and privately-sponsored exchange opportunities available to them; and (2) assist exchange organizations, both private and public (including relevant USIA Offices, Divisions, and Branches) in developing skills and understanding about how to incorporate persons with disabilities into their exchange programs through training, technical assistance, and information-sharing.

The long-term objectives in making an award to establish a disability exchanges clearinghouse are: (1) To advance mutual understanding between the United States and other countries by increasing the number of people with

disabilities participating in both publicly-sponsored and privately-sponsored international educational exchange programs; (2) to enable exchange organizations, associations and the broader public to understand and appreciate the importance and benefits of including people with disabilities in exchange programs; and (3) to help advance the civil rights of people with disabilities by their participating in exchange programs, thus benefiting personally and/or professionally from the exchange experience, while abroad and after returning home.

Guidelines

Successful Project Components

Proposals to establish and maintain a disability exchanges clearinghouse, in striving to meet the objectives described above, should include, but are not limited to the following components:

- Developing and disseminating an all-purpose brochure describing the Clearinghouse and its purposes, as well as its programs, products, and services.
- Developing a portable exhibit for use at conferences and meetings describing and promoting the Clearinghouse and its purposes, programs, products, and services.
- Developing and maintaining an electronic data base of exchange opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the principal types of international exchange programming—academic exchanges, professional and citizen exchanges, arts exchanges, international visitor programming, youth exchanges, etc. Selected information should be accessible by means of an internet gopher or web page. Selected information also should be available in alternate formats, including braille. The data base should also include resource information and references for internal use as well as information and references/resource material to assist exchange organizations to incorporate people with disabilities into their exchange programs.
- Establishing and strengthening relationships with the principal international exchange organizations and associations such as the Alliance for International Educational and Cultural Exchange, NAFSA: Association of International Educators, IIE, CIEE, and others, including selected Federal Departments and Agencies, in order to foster the possibility of collaborative efforts and to ensure that the Clearinghouse maintains comprehensive up-to-date information about exchange opportunities and resources.

- Establishing a toll-free telephone line, including TDD capability, with staff able to respond to incoming inquiries concerning international exchange programs vis-a-vis persons with disabilities.

- Developing and distributing a training/technical assistance manual, perhaps in loose-leaf format for easy update, for use by practitioners in the international exchanges field on how to incorporate persons with disabilities into their programs. Topics addressed would include such items as information about disabilities/disability awareness, publicity/recruitment, travel, affiliation/placement, accessibility and special needs accommodations, monitoring, evaluation, relevant Federal laws and regulations, resources/annotated organizational references, etc.

- Developing and conducting training/technical assistance workshops for relevant audiences regarding the incorporation of persons with disabilities into international exchange programs, perhaps in conjunction with regional/national conferences pertaining to international education/educational exchange or to the disability community.

- Writing, producing and distributing a quarterly or semi-annual journal devoted to topics pertaining to exchanges and persons with disabilities, highlighting success stories, new developments, collaborative efforts, special activities, etc. Articles written by people in the exchanges and disabilities communities and elsewhere should be welcome.

- Developing a brochure for individuals with disabilities and exchange practitioners detailing the rights and responsibilities of both when people with disabilities participate in international exchanges, following guidelines of the ADA and other Federal legislation.

- Authoring (or soliciting) and placing articles in selected local, regional, national and international newspapers and periodicals regarding the importance of including individuals with disabilities in international exchange programs, highlighting success stories, innovative programs, collaborative efforts, etc.

Where relevant, the awardee organization will be encouraged to conduct needs assessments to determine what information/resources/technical assistance is already available and what is needed by particular audiences, e.g., USIA Offices, Divisions, and Branches and related private organizations that manage or administer USIA-funded exchanges in addition to exchange associations representing the exchanges