

community. Appropriate USIA elements will provide monitoring and oversight functions vis-a-vis Clearinghouse efforts. Products and services will be developed in consultation with the Agency and reviewed and approved by relevant Agency offices. All official documents should highlight the U.S. Government's role as sponsor and funding source. USIA requests that it receive the copyright use and be allowed to distribute written material as it sees fit.

Proposal Preparation

In developing proposals, particular attention should be paid to the objectives and guidelines stated in this RFP as well as to the stated proposal review criteria.

Proposals should include an executive summary (Tab B) not to exceed five double-spaced pages, providing the following information:

- (1) Name of organization
- (2) Beginning and ending date of the program
- (3) Nature of activity
- (4) Funding level requested from USIA, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources, and total costs
- (5) Scope and goals
- (6) Brief descriptions of activities, programs, products and services to be undertaken
- (7) Anticipated results (short and long-term)

Proposals should include a narrative (Tab C) not to exceed forty double-spaced pages addressing the areas listed below:

- (1) Vision (statement of need, objectives, goals, benefits)
- (2) Participating organizations
- (3) Clearinghouse programs, products and services
- (4) Evaluation plan regarding Clearinghouse programs, products, and services
- (5) Follow-on
- (6) Clearinghouse management, including any subgrants
- (7) Work plan/time frame

Proposed Budget

Organizations must submit a comprehensive line-item budget based on specific guidance in the Solicitation Package. The award will not exceed \$500,000. The award will not be made to an organization with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs, as USIA policy dictates that such organizations will be limited to \$60,000 per assistance award.

Applicants must submit a comprehensive budget for the entire

program. There must be a three-column summary budget as well as a breakdown of each budget by line-item. For better understanding or further clarification, applicants should provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, or activity in order to facilitate USIA decisions on funding.

Allowable costs for the Clearinghouse include but are not limited to the following:

- (1) Staff salaries and benefits
- (2) staff travel and per diem
- (3) occupancy
- (4) telephone, TDD, fax, E-mail
- (5) office furniture and equipment, including computer hardware, software and telecommunications, as well as equipment to convert written text into alternate formats, including braille
- (6) office supplies
- (7) reference materials
- (8) accounting and auditing costs
- (9) indirect costs, as appropriate
- (10) consultant travel, per diem, and honoraria
- (11) duplicating and printing
- (12) postage and courier service
- (13) participant travel and per diem
- (14) conference attendance expenses, including exhibit space
- (15) meeting expenses

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for further guidance regarding proposal preparation, complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

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 stated herein and in the solicitation Package. Eligible proposals will be forwarded to panels of USIA officers for advisory review. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the Agency contracts office. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the 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 the USIA 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

Agency mission, and the short-term and long-term objectives and guidelines stated in this RFP.

2. Program planning: A detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. The agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above.

3. Ability to achieve program objectives: Objective should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the organization will meet the program's objectives and plan.

4. Program comprehensiveness: Proposals should demonstrate how the various types of exchange programming—academic exchanges, citizen and professional exchanges, arts exchanges, youth exchanges, international visitor programming, etc. will be included in Clearinghouse planning and implementation efforts.

5. Cultural awareness and sensitivity: Proposals should demonstrate an awareness and sensitivity of issues related to people with disabilities, particularly in a cross-cultural/international setting.

6. Multiplier effect/impact: Proposed Clearinghouse activities should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and detail potential long-term benefits.

7. Support of Diversity: Proposals should demonstrate the recipient's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity.

8. Institutional Capacity: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the Clearinghouse's goals.

9. Institution's Record/Ability: Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including previous interactions with other organizations in the exchanges and disability fields, as well as 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.

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

11. Project/Activity Evaluation: Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the Clearinghouse's success, at