4. Assurances of quality, fairness, balance and openness in the selection of project participants.

Proposed projects should involve U.S. Information Service (USIS) posts worldwide to carry out activities supportive of the USIA mission to increase mutual understanding between the United States and other countries and to promote international cooperation in educational and cultural fields. USIS' role in such projects should be substantive and integral and not purely facilitative.

Proposals including performances and/or exhibitions will be considered only if the performance or exhibition is integral to the creative process. Projects in which exhibitions and/or performances are the main focus will not be supported.

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 race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and physical challenges.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle.

Drafts of all printed materials developed for this program using USIA funds should be submitted to the Agency for review and approval. USIA must receive a royalty-free, non-exclusive and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the work for Federal purposes, and to authorize others to do so. Funded projects must acknowledge USIA sponsorship in all printed project materials and official project documents.

Special conditions and exclusions:

- 1. USIS Posts should be given the option of nominating foreign program participants, while the U.S. grantee organization will make final selection decisions.
- 2. Proposals involving more than one country are preferred. However, single-country projects that have strong USIS Post support and clearly demonstrate the potential for creating and strengthening linkages between foreign and U.S. institutions are also welcome.
- 3. Proposals involving foreign organizations should identify them and clearly define their role in the project. Letters of commitment from these organizations should be included in the proposal package. Prospective applicants should consult with USIS

Posts regarding such organizations prior to submitting their proposals.

4. Proposals centering on films or videos must deal with the creative aspects of film or video making. Projects may include story development, other aspects of the creative processes, or management issues like funding and distribution. They should not include installations, screenings, competitions, full scale film production or distribution, or any other type of project prohibited in this announcement.

The following types of projects are

ineligible for support:

1. Vocational and technical training projects;

- 2. Scholarly programs, long-term academic study or training programs, and student and/or faculty exchanges (Organizations interested in programs of this nature should contact USIA's Office of Academic Programs—202–619–6409);
- 3. Speaking tours, conferences, research projects, research for project development purposes, publications;
- 4. Youth or youth-related activities (participants' age under 25) or projects for the exchange of amateurs or semi-professionals;
- 5. International arts competitions, community-level arts presentations or festivals for general audiences;
- 6. Study tours and observerships;
- 7. Projects in the fields of historical and cultural conservation and preservation.

USIA is a major supporter of Sister Cities International and Partners of the Americas. It has agreed to fund administrative expenses of these organizations' national offices, but will not fund projects arising from sister city and partner state relationships once they are established.

Geographic guidelines:

Proposals which address themselves to various geographic regions of the world, and allow across-the-board participation from all areas are preferred. In addition, preferences for specific geographic areas are:

- 1. Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, the Near/Middle East, and South Asia: Proposals are especially encouraged for projects in these regions. There are no specific preferences in terms of thematic fields.
- 2. American Republics (South America, Central America and the Caribbean): Proposals are invited in all appropriate areas. Preference will be given to proposals that focus on ethnic and indigenous arts.
- 3. Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union: Proposals should clearly demonstrate knowledge of the host country environment and the

institutional partner in that country and provide evidence of long-term commitment to project goals.

4. Western Europe and Canada: Only proposals that are multi-country, address arts financing in the U.S., and invite arts administrators as participants will be considered.

Visa/Insurance/Tax Requirements

Programs must comply with J–1 visa regulations. Please refer to program specific guidelines in Solicitation Package for further details.

Administration of the program must be in compliance with reporting and withholding regulations for federal, state, and local taxes as applicable. Recipient organizations should demonstrate tax regulation adherence in the proposal narrative and budget.

Budgetary Requirements

Detailed budgetary requirements and guidelines are included in the Solicitation Package. Creative Arts discretionary awards are on average approximately \$58,000 with many successful proposals coming in at well below this level. Organizations may request up to \$100,000 for singlecountry projects. In exceptional cases awards of up to \$200,000 dollars are available for multi-country projects. Organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs are eligible for awards up to \$60,000. Please note that proposal budgets must include a minimum of 33% cost sharing of the total project cost. Administrative costs must be no more than 20% of the total amount requested from USIA.

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 in the Solicitation Package. Eligible proposals will be reviewed by the Office of Arts America, USIA geographic area policy offices, and USIA Posts overseas. Panels of USIA officers will make funding recommendations. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the General Counsel or by other USIA 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 Office of Contracts.

Review Criteria

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to