

**Submission for OMB Review;  
Comment Request**

April 2, 1996.

The Department of the Treasury has submitted the following public information collection requirement(s) to OMB for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980, Public Law 96-511. Copies of the submission(s) may be obtained by calling the Treasury Bureau Clearance Officer listed. Comments regarding this information collection should be addressed to the OMB reviewer listed and to the Treasury Department Clearance Officer, Department of the Treasury, Room 2110, 1425 New York Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20220.

*Special Request:* In order to conduct the survey described below at the end of April 1996, the Department of the Treasury is requesting Office of Management and Budget (OMB) review and approve this information collection by April 16, 1996. To obtain a copy of this survey, please contact the IRS Clearance Officer at the address listed below.

**Internal Revenue Service (IRS)***OMB Number:* 1545-1432.*Project Number:* PC:V 96-007-G.*Type of Review:* Revision.*Title:* IRS Early Referral Program Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*Description:* The purpose of this survey is to determine program effective of the Early Referral Program and to identify what our customers value. Appeals is proposing to obtain this information through a customer satisfaction survey.

*Respondents:* Individual or households.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 20.

*Estimated Burden Hours Per Respondent:* 2 minutes.

*Frequency of Response:* Other.

*Estimated Total Reporting Burden:* 40 minutes.

*Clearance Officer:* Garrick Shear, (202) 622-3869, Internal Revenue Service, Room 5571, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20224.

*OMB Reviewer:* Milo Sunderhauf, (202) 395-7340, Office of Management and Budget, Room 10226, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503.

Lois K. Holland,

*Departmental Reports Management Officer.*

[FR Doc. 96-8857 Filed 4-10-96; 8:45 am]

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**Submission for OMB Review;  
Comment Request**

April 2, 1996.

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*Special Request:* In order to conduct the survey described below at the end of April 1996, the Department of the Treasury is requesting Office of Management and Budget (OMB) review and approve this information collection by April 16, 1996. To obtain a copy of this survey, please contact the IRS Clearance Officer at the address listed below.

**Internal Revenue Service (IRS)***OMB Number:* 1545-1432.*Project Number:* PC:V 96-008-G.*Type of Review:* Revision.*Title:* IRS Employment Tax Early Referral Program Customer Satisfaction Survey.

*Description:* The purpose of this survey is to determine program effective of the Employment Tax Early Referral Program and to identify what our customers value. Appeals is proposing to obtain this information through a customer satisfaction survey.

*Respondents:* Individual or households.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 220.

*Estimated Burden Hours Per Respondent:* 2 minutes.

*Frequency of Response:* Other.

*Estimated Total Reporting Burden:* 7 hours.

*Clearance Officer:* Garrick Shear, (202) 622-3869, Internal Revenue Service, Room 5571, 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20224.

*OMB Reviewer:* Milo Sunderhauf, (202) 395-7340, Office of Management and Budget, Room 10226, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503.

Lois K. Holland,

*Departmental Reports Management Officer.*

[FR Doc. 96-8858 Filed 4-10-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4830-01-P

**UNITED STATES INFORMATION  
AGENCY****Academic Year Program NIS  
Administration Components****ACTION:** Notice—Request for Proposals.

**SUMMARY:** The Division for the NIS Secondary School Initiative, Office of Citizen Exchanges, of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award to conduct a package of administrative components for the Academic Year Program. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c)(3)-1 may apply to develop a package of various components for the 1997-98 Academic Year Program (AYP), as spelled out below, for 1,000 high school students from the 12 New Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union. This RFP is only for this package of components; grants for the placement and supervision of the students in the United States on this program and other components will be competed separately. Final award of a grant or grants is subject to the availability of funding.

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 cited above is provided in part through the Department of State from the Agency for International Development.

Programs and projects must conform with Agency requirements and guidelines outlined in the Solicitation Package. USIA projects and programs are subject to the availability of funds.

**ANNOUNCEMENT TITLE AND NUMBER:** All communications with USIA concerning this announcement should refer to the above title and reference number E/P-96-33.

**DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS:** All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on May 31, 1996. Faxed documents will not be accepted, nor will documents postmarked May 31 but received at a later date. It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that proposals are received by the above deadline. The grant period will begin on or about August 1, 1996 and run for one year until July 31, 1997. The grant is subject to renewal if deemed successful by the Agency.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** The NIS Secondary School Initiative (E/PY), Room 320, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547, telephone 202-619-6299, fax 202-619-5311 to request a Solicitation Package containing more detailed award criteria, required application forms, and standard guidelines for preparing proposals (called "Project Goals, Objectives and Implementation" or "POGI"), including specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget.

**TO DOWNLOAD A SOLICITATION PACKAGE VIA INTERNET:** The Solicitation Package may be downloaded from USIA's website at <http://www.usia.gov/> or from the Internet Gopher at <gopher://gopher.usia.gov>. Select "Education and Cultural Exchanges", then select "Current Request for Proposals (RFPs)." Please read "About the Following RFPs" before beginning to download.

Please specify USIA Program Officer/Specialist Diana Aronson on all inquiries and correspondences. Interested applicants should read the complete Federal Register announcement before sending inquiries or submitted proposals. Once the RFP deadline has passed, Agency staff may not discuss this competition in any way with applicants until the Bureau proposal review process has been completed.

**SUBMISSIONS:** Applicants must follow all instructions given in the Solicitation Package. The original, two fully tabbed copies and ten copies with Tabs A-E of the application should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/P-96-33, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

Applicants must also submit the "Executive Summary" and "Proposal Narrative" sections of the 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 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.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

##### **Overview**

The Academic Year Program (AYP)—known also as the FREEDOM Support Act Program—has been sponsored by USIA since 1992. The 1997-98 AYP will be the fifth cycle of the program. It provides an opportunity for high school students aged 15-17 from the 12 NIS countries to live with an American host family for eleven months and attend one full year of a high school. The scholarship covers all aspects of their program—recruitment and selection, travel, orientation, placement and supervision, maintenance, cultural and educational enhancements, and follow-up upon return to their home countries. Placement, supervision, maintenance and enhancements are not part of the package covered by this solicitation. For budgeting purposes, applicants should assume that the number of participants will be 1,000, with about 50% coming from Russia, 20% from Ukraine, and the remaining 30% from the other ten countries (details can be found in the "Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation" guidelines referred to above).

Applicants must address the complete package of components outlined below and may bid on one or more of the following four regions of the NIS: (A) Russia and Belarus; (B) Ukraine and Moldova; (C) The Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan); (D) Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan).

The objectives of the Academic Year Program are:

1. To foster interaction between young people from the United States and the

former Soviet Union and greater understanding of one another so as to contribute to our common future through our greatest resource, our youth.

2. To provide high school students from the former Soviet Union an opportunity to live with American host families, attend school, and learn about American society, history, cultural, and the economic and political foundations of the United States.

3. To integrate the people of the former Soviet Union into the global citizenry by assisting young people of the NIS countries in building a new and open society and by promoting democratic values and the development of democratic institutions from the grass roots level.

4. To provide opportunities for youth from the NIS to acquire values and skills and enhance those personal qualities that will make them successful citizens and future leaders of their societies.

##### **Eligibility**

Applicants may be public institutions or organizations that are legally incorporated and recognized by the IRS as not-for-profit. Applicants may be single organizations or one or more organizations working in consortium. For consortia, each organization should submit a separate proposal for its components and indicate clearly how these dovetail with the other consortium member(s).

##### **Guidelines**

The package of components for this solicitation encompasses the following:

1. Recruitment and selection of student finalists.
2. Documentation—assistance with passports, visas; assistance to USIA with preparation of IAP66 forms on finalists and alternates.
3. Medical screening and clearance to ensure that the students are healthy; immunizations as necessary.
4. Orientation—Programming for all participants prior to departure from the NIS and/or upon arrival in the U.S.
5. Travel—Ticketing and all arrangements from the students' homes to their host communities and return.
6. Communications and liaison with the students' families during the program year.
7. Information management—Tracking and database maintenance on all applicants through their selection as finalists, their placement, and travel.
8. Tracking of, support for and follow-up programming with alumni upon their return home.

The following considerations apply to these responsibilities:

1. The ongoing communications with natural parents, followup activities with alumni, and relations with foreign government officials all require that the grantee organization(s) maintain a year-round presence in the NIS countries. The grantee should seek to conduct these functions efficiently and cost-effectively but without necessarily having an American staff or permanent offices in every country or in all regions of the large countries.

2. All on-the-ground operations in the NIS of this administrative machinery must be staffed by non-US Government personnel in such a way to ensure that USIA and American embassy personnel are not encumbered by the day-to-day functioning of the program.

3. The aim of the program is to select students who have the personal qualities, motivation, and the academic language and social skills to be successful on the exchange. Recruitment and selection must be conducted on the basis of merit and be free of political influence and corruption; to accomplish this, the process must be under the overall direct control of Americans at all times. Selection of finalists should be conducted in the U.S.

4. Selection must reflect the cultural, ethnic, national and geographic diversity of the NIS. The recruitment process must be open in allowing and making it possible for any student who meets the eligibility criteria to apply. A serious effort must be made to include students with physical disabilities. Intensive English training may be offered for a small percentage (no more than 5%) to ensure that the weaker language qualifications of students from more remote areas is not an excluding factor in their selection. [Such training is completed separately.] It is not necessary or even possible, given budget constraints, to cover every oblast. The grantee should focus its recruitment on major population areas, while keeping the process open to applicants from all areas.

5. Uniform arrival orientation for all AYP students is essential, because it reinforces their identity as participants in a government scholarship program and enables the dissemination of information, policies and procedures critical to the students' success.

6. What happens to participants once they return home is critically important to ensuring the program's success in fulfilling its objectives. The grantee organizations are responsible for ensuring the tracking of alumni, data collection/reporting, and follow-on activities to reinforce the transfer of the American experience to the NIS.

Please refer to program specific guidelines (POGI) in the Solicitation Package for further details.

Participants travel on J-1 visas. As the sponsor is USIA, IAP66 forms are prepared using the Government program designation number. As noted above, the grantee is responsible for assisting USIA in the preparation of these forms.

#### Timetable

The recruitment and selection process must be concluded by March 1, 1997, so that finalist applications can be disseminated to the organizations responsible for placing the students in host families and schools. Travel to the US is expected to take place in July/August, 1997, in conjunction with the needs of the placement organizations. Return travel should be similarly undertaken in June/July, 1998. All components should be planned in accordance with the dates and deadlines set by the needs of the program (e.g., the date by which students need to apply for passports, the timing of arrival in the host families, the conclusion of the school year).

#### Proposed Budget

The per capita cost of this whole package of components excluding Travel and Orientation must not exceed \$2,500 per finalist. Travel must be arranged in compliance with laws on the use of American flag carriers.

Applicants must submit a comprehensive line-item budget for the entire package of components. There must be a summary budget as well as a break-down reflecting both the administrative and program costs. Cost-sharing is encouraged, cash contributions and in-kind. Please refer to the solicitation package and POGI for complete budget and formatting instructions and for allowable costs.

Grants awarded to eligible organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchange programs will be limited to \$60,000.

#### 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 program office, as well as the USIA Office of East European and NIS Affairs and the USIS posts in the NIS countries. Proposals may 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 design outlined above.

2. Program planning: Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview, timetable and guidelines described above.

3. Ability to achieve program objectives: Proposals should clearly demonstrate an understanding of the program's objectives stated above and how the organization will achieve them.

4. Support of Diversity: Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity. Achievable and relevant features should be cited in both program administration (e.g., staffing, program venue) and program content (especially selection of participants and orientation).

5. Institutional Capacity: Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. The proposal should clearly explain how the organization will make use of and coordinate with other related NIS and US operations it may be conducting. Proposals should reflect substantial area expertise, a grasp of cross-cultural issues, the needs of the hosting community (including the American host schools and the placement organizations), and a thorough understanding of how to work effectively with NIS authorities and complexities of the environment.

6. Institution's Record/Ability: Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful activities that are relevant to this program; also 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.

7. Project Evaluation: The proposal should include a plan to evaluate the success of the organization in achieving the stated objectives. The grantee will also be expected to cooperate with USIA in evaluating the program under the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA). Proposals should reflect an understanding and grasp of these responsibilities.

8. Cost-effectiveness: 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.

9. Cost-sharing: Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding and in-kind contributions.

10. Value to U.S.-Partner Country Relations: Proposed projects should receive positive assessments by USIA's geographic area desk and overseas officers of potential impact and significance in the partner countries.

#### Notice

The terms and conditions published in this RFP are binding and may not be modified by any USIA representative. Explanatory information provided by the Agency 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 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 USIA procedures.

Dated: April 5, 1996.

Dell Pendergrast,

*Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.*

[FR Doc. 96-9005 Filed 4-10-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8230-01-M

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request

**AGENCY:** Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

#### **ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** As part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on this information collection. This request for comment is being made pursuant to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-13; 44 U.S.C. 3506(c)(2)(A)). Comments should address the accuracy of the burden estimates and ways to minimize the burden including the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other forms of information technology, as well as other relevant aspects of the information collection.

**DATES:** Written comments and recommendations on the proposal for the collection of information should be received June 10, 1996.

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Nancy J. Kessinger, Veterans Benefits Administration (20M30), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. All comments will become a matter of public record and will be summarized in the VBA request for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval. In this document VBA is soliciting comments concerning the following information collection:

*OMB Control Number:* 2900-0459.

*Title and Form Number:* Property Management Consolidated Invoice, VA Form 26-8974.

*Type of Review:* Extension of a currently approved collection.

*Need and Uses:* VA Form 26-8974 is generated monthly by the computerized Property Management System at the VA Automation Center, Austin, Texas. Invoices show assigned properties with the assigned numerical identification and property location for each. Fixed fees, as applicable, are computer-entered for each property for certain management services, such as monthly inspection. The invoice is sent to the broker from Austin on or about the 25th day of each month. The broker then enters any additional charges for each property, affixes supporting documentation for reimbursement of expenses claimed, such as for utilities, and mails the invoice to the VA regional office of jurisdiction. Invoices are then reviewed by Realty Specialists to verify accuracy of charges, and forwarded to Finance activity for audit and payment.

*Current Actions:* As a consequence of the home loan activities, VA acquires residential properties which are rehabilitated and rented or sold under the authority of 38 U.S.C. 3720(a) (5)

and (6). VA must rely on the services of property management brokers to provide the necessary surveillance and maintenance services for the protection, rental, and resale of its widely dispersed inventory. VA policies provide that management brokers may incur charges for certain items such as fuel, electricity, and water, and when proper authorization has been given, for maintenance and repair expenses. Brokers are also paid for certain services they perform, such as initial and repair inspections, and for routine maintenance, such as lawn care or snow removal. As is customary in the property management industry, VA reimburses management brokers for expenses incurred for VA properties, and pays broker-performed services upon receipt of monthly invoices.

*Affected Public:* Business or other for-profit.

*Estimated Annual Burden:* 32,215 hours.

*Estimated Average Burden Per Respondent:* 10 minutes.

*Frequency of Response:* Monthly.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 1,895.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Requests for additional information or copies of the form should be directed to Department of Veterans Affairs, Attn: Jacquie McCray, Information Management Service (045A4), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, Telephone (202) 565-8266 or FAX (202) 565-8267.

Dated: April 1, 1996.

By direction of the Secretary.

Donald L. Neilson,

*Director, Information Management Service.*

[FR Doc. 96-8990 Filed 4-10-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 8320-01-P

### Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request

**AGENCY:** Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

#### **ACTION:** Notice.

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