

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Highway Administration****Environmental Impact Statement:
Jackson County, Missouri**

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement (EIS) will be prepared for proposed improvements to the transportation system in Jackson County, Missouri.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Donald Neumann, Programs Engineer, FHWA Division Office, 209 Adams St., Jefferson City, MO 65101, Telephone: (573) 636-7104 or Mr. Steve Noble, Manager, Long Range Transportation Planning, Mid-America Regional Council, 600 Broadway, Suite 300, Kansas City, MO 65105, Telephone: (816) 474-4240.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), will prepare an EIS for proposed improvements to the transportation system in Jackson County, Missouri. Improvements to the corridor are considered necessary to provide for a safe and efficient transportation network.

MARC initiated a Major Investment Study (MIS) in April 1997 to identify and evaluate potential transportation improvements in the Missouri River Corridor. The area studied during the MIS is generally located along the Missouri River in Clay and Jackson Counties. The boundaries of the study area were I-70 on the south, I-35 on the west, N. 48th Street on the north, and M-7 on the east. The east-west distance of the study area is approximately 17 miles. The north-south distance ranges from six miles on the eastern end to approximately 10 miles on the western end. Major Routes studied included M-210, U.S. 24, M-78, M-12, Chouteau Trafficway, Front Street, and the proposed Little Blue and South Riverfront Expressways. As a result of the MIS, this EIS will address the impacts associated with improvements on Front Street between I-29/35 and I-435, improvements on the Chouteau Trafficway between I-35 and Front street (excluding the Chouteau Bridge which is currently under construction), and construction of the South Riverfront and Little Blue River Expressways.

The goals of the proposed project established during the MIS include: 1) improve the safety of the Missouri River

Corridor facilities; 2) improve mobility in the Missouri River Corridor; 3) facilitate the development of an efficient, integrated transportation system; 4) support economic development; 5) manage the transportation system to maximize the return on the Region's investment in highway and transit networks; 6) maintain or improve the quality of the natural environment, and 7) enhance quality of life. A location study will run concurrently with the preparation of the EIS. It will advance both "build" and "no build" alternatives for evaluation by the EIS.

The scoping process, which began during the MIS, will continue with appropriate federal, state, local agencies, private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. Preliminary information has been issued to local officials and other interested parties. Additional public meetings will be held to further engage the regional community in the decisionmaking process and to obtain public comment. A public hearing will be held to present the findings of the DEIS. The DEIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA or MARC at the addresses provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12373 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program).

Issued: October 27, 1998.

Donald L. Neumann,

Programs Engineer, Jefferson City.

[FR Doc. 98-29674 Filed 11-4-98; 8:45 am]

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**UNITED STATES INFORMATION
AGENCY****Development of an Educational
Advisers Reference Tool and Research
Service for Overseas U.S. Educational
Advising Centers**

ACTION: Notice—request for proposals.

SUMMARY: The Advising and Student Services Branch of the United States Information Agency's Bureau of

Educational and Cultural Affairs announces an open competition for an assistance award. Public or private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in IRS regulation 26 CFR 1.501(c)(3)-1 may apply. In collaboration with the United States Information Agency (USIA), the organization should produce an educational advisers reference tool to provide timely and in-depth information on trends and developments in U.S. higher education and other issues and topics relevant to the USIA-affiliated overseas educational advising and information centers. The organization will also answer reference inquiries from USIA-designated educational advising offices overseas. USIA anticipates awarding up to \$90,000 to one organization for these activities.

Overview

In the interest of providing this material in a broad and timely manner, USIA encourages submissions that propose delivery via electronic (e.g. web, e-mail) as well as traditional print means. The proposal should illustrate how the organization will produce an internet website, e-mail format, and/or print version to provide timely and in-depth information for the staff of the USIA-affiliated overseas educational advising and information centers which provide accurate, unbiased information on, and advise foreign nationals about, opportunities for studying in the United States. The information should be centered on an overall theme related to trends and developments in international student mobility, the practice of educational advising, or U.S. higher education which will enhance the guidance given by overseas educational advisers to international students and others who inquire about opportunities for studying in the United States.

Guidelines

The website must be designed in a user-friendly fashion, with an index of topics, and ideally in a format that can be shared directly with students with minimal repackaging by the adviser. If necessary, the website may be password protected. E-mail issues of timely topics must be distributed regularly. If a print version is produced, the organization should describe what publishing capacity will be used to assure that each issue (at least 32 pages) is produced quickly and efficiently (at least four times a year) in an attractive typeset quality format.

In addition, funds will be awarded to enable the recipient to perform

supplemental research to provide in-depth responses to inquiries from USIA-affiliated educational advisers overseas. Answers to questions of general interest should be posted on the website.

The website and/or print version must acknowledge that its contents were developed, in part, under a grant from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Information Agency. USIA reserves the right to use all materials produced for noncommercial purposes of educational advancement outside the U.S.

Proposed Budget

A comprehensive line item budget should be submitted together with the proposal. The budget should not exceed \$90,000 for the development of the website/e-mail/print version and research service. Grants awarded to eligible organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international educational programs will be limited to a total of \$60,000. For both electronic and/or print versions, applicants may sell subscriptions and use advertising to offset production costs in excess of the grant.

The applicant is required to submit a comprehensive line item budget, based on the specific guidance in the Solicitation Package. There must be a summary budget as well as a breakdown of the administrative budget. USIA's grant assistance will not exceed \$90,000. Of this amount, not more than \$27,000 may be attributed to overhead expenses. The \$90,000 is expected to constitute only a portion of the total project funding. Cost sharing is required and the proposal should list other anticipated sources of support. Grant applications should demonstrate financial and in-kind support.

Allowable costs for the program include the following:

- (1) Salaries and fringe benefits
- (2) Website design costs, printing, utilities, and other direct costs
- (3) Indirect expenses, auditing costs

Applicants should refer to the Solicitation package for 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, as well as

the USIA Area Offices and the USIA posts overseas, where appropriate. 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 grant awards resides with USIA's contracting 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. Program Planning

Proposals should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to design a website and e-mail system, and/or produce a publication which will successfully address the needs for timely information and in-depth and balanced exploration of issues and topics important to overseas educational advisers. In addition, the proposal should illustrate the resources and professional contacts necessary to respond in a timely manner to inquiries by overseas educational advisers are available.

2. Institution's Track Record/Ability

Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past Agency grants as determined by USIA's Office of Contracts. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program goals.

3. Demonstrated Ability

Proposals should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. The proposal should describe technological and editorial capability.

4. Project Evaluation

Proposal should provide a plan for evaluation by the grantee institution, including periodic progress reports at the end of the grant cycle, as well as intermediate reports.

5. Cost-Effectiveness

The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate.

6. Cost-Sharing

Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector

support as well as institutional direct funding contributions. For both electronic and/or print versions, applicants may sell subscriptions and use advertising to offset production costs in excess of the grant.

7. Support of Diversity

Proposals should demonstrate the recipient's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity, and should expose readers to the widest possible range of views and approaches to U.S. higher education. Attention should be given to printing articles relating to different kinds of schools and universities from various regions of the U.S.

Authorization

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."

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 Name and Number

All communications with USIA concerning this announcement should refer to the above title and reference number E/ASA-99-08.

Deadline for Proposal

All copies must be received at the U.S. Information Agency by 5 p.m. Washington, D.C. time on December 16, 1998. Faxed documents will not be accepted, nor will documents postmarked on December 16, 1998 but received at a later date. It is the responsibility of each applicant to ensure that proposals are received by the above deadline. Grant should begin April 1, 1999 and run through March 31, 2000.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Advising and Student Services, E/ASA, Room 349, U.S. Information Agency, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C.

20547, Tel: (202) 619-5549, Fax: (202) 401-1433, E-mail: aprince@usia.gov. Potential applicants are encouraged to contact the program office to request an Application Package, which includes more detailed award criteria; all application forms, and guidelines for preparing proposals, including specific criteria for preparation of the proposal budget. Please specify the USIA Program Officer, Ann Prince, on all inquiries and correspondences. Interested applicants should read the complete **Federal Register** announcement before addressing inquiries to E/ASA or submitting their proposals to the United States Information Agency. Once the RFP deadline has passed, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs may not discuss this competition in any way with applicants until after the Bureau proposal review process has been completed.

Submissions

Applicants must follow all instructions given in the Solicitation Package. The original and ten copies of the complete application, plus one extra copy of the cover sheet, should be sent to: U.S. Information Agency, Ref.: E/ASA-99-08, Office of Grants Management, E/XE, Room 326, 301 4th Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20547.

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. 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 reflect advancement of this goal in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

Year 2000 Compliance Requirement (Y2K Requirement)

The Year 2000 (Y2K) issue is a broad operational and accounting problem that could potentially prohibit organizations from processing information in accordance with Federal management and program specific requirements including data exchange with USIA. The inability to process information in accordance with Federal requirements could result in grantees' being required to return funds that have not been accounted for properly.

USIA therefore requires all organizations use Y2K compliant systems including hardware, software, and firmware. Systems must accurately process data and dates (calculating, comparing and sequencing) both before and after the beginning of the year 2000 and correctly adjust for leap years.

Additional information addressing the Y2K issue may be found at the General Services Administration's Office of Information Technology website at <http://www.itpolicy.gsa.gov>.

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 budget in accordance with the needs of the program and availability of funding. Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal USIA procedures.

Notification

All applicant will be notified of the results of the review process on or about March 19, 1999. Awards will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

Dated: October 29, 1998.

John P. Loiello,

Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Notification

All applicants will be notified of the results of the review process on or about March 19, 1999. Awards will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

Judith Siegel,

Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-New (OP&P)]

Proposed Information Collection Activity: Proposed Collection; Comment Request

AGENCY: Office of Policy and Planning, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Office of Policy and Planning (OP&P), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), is announcing an opportunity for public comment on the proposed collection of certain information by the agency. Under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995, Federal agencies are required to publish notice in the **Federal Register** concerning each proposed collection of information, including each proposed new collection of information, and allow 60 days for public comment in response to the notice. This notice solicits comments on the information that will be collected by a survey concerning the VA's three educational programs.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before January 4, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on the collection of information to Marcelle Habibion, Task Order Project Manager, Office of Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning (008), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20420. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-NEW (OP&P)" in any correspondence.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marcelle Habibion at (202) 273-5058 or FAX (202) 273-5993.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Under the PRA of 1995 (Public Law 104-13; 44 U.S.C., 3501-3520), Federal agencies must obtain approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for each collection of information they conduct or sponsor. This request for comment is being made pursuant to Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the PRA.

With respect to the following collection of information, the Office of Policy and Planning invites comments on: (1) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of VA's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of VA's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be