

Cuban Nonprofit Management Scholarship Program

WHAP-WHAAQPPC-15-003

July 16, 2015

Questions and Answers re Notice of Funding Opportunity published June 23, 2015

Note: These questions follow the first posting of questions on July 8.

Q8. What are the current assessments being currently used in Cuba to determine the academic capacity of the student (example in the U.S. we have the GRE)?

A8. According to the Educational Testing Service, the TOEFL is now being offered in Cuba, but the GRE is not. While this may change in the coming years, applicants should plan on alternative ways to assess the academic capacity of potential students.

Q9. What are the current assessments of the academic rigor of the institutions of learning in Cuba? Can we get access to any peer review assessment of institutions?

A9. WHA does not have this information available for applicant organizations. We encourage you to explore the resources on your own.

Q10. Is a Master of Public Administration with a nonprofit concentration a desired degree for this program?

A10. WHA would consider that to be an acceptable master's degree as long as it has the nonprofit management concentration. The focus of this program is to provide participants with a set of tools and skills to manage and grow civil society organizations that will effectively support democratic principles in Cuba.

Reference to the NOFO, p. 6: "Master's degree: The degree may be, for example, an M.A. of Public Affairs. In this instance, the concentration must be in nonprofit management. The proposal should explain the extent to which the nonprofit management concentration makes up the course credits."

Q11. Is there a preference for individual course of study versus a cohort approach for this NOFO?

A11. No, there is no preference; the applicant organization may propose its own plan.

Q12. We plan to recommend the following cohort flow:

[Deleted – proprietary information]

Are there any potential demerits or negatives to this cohort approach?

A12. WHA cannot provide early comments on the specifics of your application. Please reference (NOFO, p. 7):

“Students scheduled to start fall 2016 should require only a month or so of English preparation. Others who need more preparation will need to start their graduate program in 2017.”

“The number of students participating each year need not be the same, and the number of master’s students versus certificate students will reflect the interests and qualifications of the selected applicants.”

Q13. Is the NOFO open to students living off-campus or is there a preference for on-campus living?

A13. WHA has no stated preference for one or the other. As with all aspects of the proposal, a brief description of the reasoning behind the applicant organization’s choices is recommended.

Q14. Is the total amount of the grant to be used for the 4 years term of the grant or is the amount \$1,584,158 per year?

A14. The amount of \$1,584,158 is to be used for the four-year term of the grant.

Q15. You say a minimum of 15 students. If there is more, will you increase the amount of the grant?

A15. No. The expenses for 15 or more students must be accommodated with the grant amount of \$1,584,158.

Q16. Will this grant be renewed after the first term?

A16. That has not yet been determined.

Q17. With the news of the U.S. re-opening an embassy in Havana, will the grantee be expected to work closely with embassy officials or should they anticipate that the embassy will not be involved in the scholarship program?

A17. The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs will serve as the liaison between the grantee and the U.S. diplomatic presence in Havana.

Q18. Should the applicant budget for staff to travel to Cuba to work on recruitment or follow-on?

A18. Applicants are not required to budget for staff travel to Cuba.

Q19. Page 16 of the NOFO states that the proposal narrative has a page limit of “ten [10] to 20 pages in Microsoft Word.” Could WHA please confirm that this limit refers to 10 pages single-spaced or 20 pages double-spaced?

A19. As noted on page 15 of the NOFO, all Word documents should be single-spaced. The narrative may be between 10 and 20 pages.

Q20. Page 16 of the NOFO states that attachments are “not to exceed nine [9] pages total. However, the guidelines that follow end with “Pages 5-7: Additional optional attachments.” Could WHA please confirm that this should instead say “Pages 5-9” to reflect the nine page limit?

A20. You are correct. It should say Pages 5-9. Thank you for your input.

Q21. Approximately how many students does WHA envision would have a sufficient level of English to begin their graduate program in fall 2016?

A21. An applicant should demonstrate an understanding of the applicant pool in its proposal, and can base these estimates on its own information.

Q22. Will the U.S. Department of State be sponsoring the students, or will the award recipient and/or host institutions need to sponsor and pay the SEVIS fee?

A22. “The award recipient or host institutions will issue the relevant forms to support the students in obtaining appropriate visas.” [NOFO, p. 8] Thus, the award recipient and/or host institutions need to sponsor and pay the SEVIS fee.

Q23. Should the applicant include a separate line-item in the budget for estimated withholding for taxes, or would it be sufficient to add a cushion to scholarship-related line items to account for potential tax withholding?

A23. The applicant should make sure that all its expenses are clear to the proposal reviewers.

Q24. Can the applicant budget for English translation of students’ transcripts from Cuba?

A24. The list of allowable program costs indicates what may be included, and is not necessarily exhaustive. Line items not explicitly mentioned may be proposed, and the budget narrative should be used to clarify and justify those line items.

Q25. In the NOFO, it states that the Bureau envisions participants receiving a mix of Masters degrees or completing certificate programs. Does the Bureau have a preference on the ratio of full degree vs. certificate programs?

A25. No, no preference. As noted on page 7 of the NOFO, “The number of students participating each year need not be the same, and the number of master’s students versus certificate students will reflect the interests and qualifications of the selected applicants.”

Q26. The NOFO mentions non-profit focus areas such as environmental protection, youth engagement, animal welfare, transportation safety, and gender issues. Are there additional NGO focus areas the Bureau would like to support?

A26. This list merely provides some examples, and is neither exhaustive nor limiting. Applicants would be free to propose other fields, though should ensure that these fields are in issue areas of universal concern to democratically managed nonprofit organizations.

Q27. Is there flexibility in the proposed timeline that the Bureau has outlined in the NOFO?

A27. Applicants are expected to propose programs that work within the timeframe indicated in the NOFO.

Q28. Does the Bureau have a preference for the Cuban government entities we should involve in the program implementation?

A28. WHA cannot support or fund Cuban government entities' involvement in the program implementation.