



## **Teacher-In-Residence Travel Grant Guidelines Education and Culture Program**

Partners of the Americas offers Teacher-in-Residence Travel Grants to Partners chapters and their English-teacher volunteers through the Education and Culture Program. The program's top priority is to establish a wide range of international exchange activities that improve English as a second language education. The Teacher-in-Residence Exchanges, north-south and south-north, utilize Partners' volunteers' extensive international experience in language training and curriculum development to strengthen technical expertise and quality instruction while creating respect for other cultures.

Partners chapters must coordinate the Teacher-in-Residence Travel Grants with a bi-national center (BNC). BNCs are common throughout the Americas and were founded by the US government in the 1950's. Now privatized, the BNCs have a local board of directors, generate income from English teaching and cultural events, and serve as a non-profit, apolitical initiative to strengthen people-to-people relations between the United States and the country in which the BNC is located. Partners chapters frequently work with BNCs, especially at the project level, where English teachers, performing artists, and traveling exhibits enrich the BNC agenda while also promoting the chapter partnership. There are many cases in which shared board members and resources and boost active chapter membership and BNC involvement.

BNC directors strive to motivate their teachers and recognize their achievements. The Teacher-in-Residence Travel Grants offer English teachers a unique opportunity to improve their teaching skills and enrich their curriculum. We encourage the Partners' Education or Cultural Committee Chairs to collaborate with BNC directors and the U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Offices. While the Teacher-in-Residence Travel Grants are intended to serve BNCs, the activities of a teacher in residence can include involvement with other educational entities, such as, a university English language, linguistics, and American literature program and/or federal and state-level Ministries of Education.

### **Objectives**

- To strengthen bi-national center program by providing opportunities for English language and American culture teachers from binational centers to visit the U.S. to improve their language skills, share views on teaching techniques, and gain new understanding of the U.S. English-speaking culture, and to provide opportunities for teachers, curriculum specialists from the U.S. to work with bi-national centers in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- To further promote the special relationship that exists between bi-national centers in Latin America and the local Partners chapter and increase the latter's interaction with their northern Partner chapter. This can be accomplished by having a participant with some direct relationship with a bi-national center in South America travel to the U.S. to observe and consult with educational specialists involved with English as a Foreign/Second language programs, U.S. culture or U.S. history in U.S. public schools, and also meet with foreign language educators in U.S. universities or community colleges.

## **Benefits**

Partners will provide a round-trip air ticket to the teacher and provide US\$400 to the hosting Partners' chapter to use to help defray part of the teacher's expenses. It is up to the hosting chapter to work out financial arrangements with the visiting Teacher-in-Residence prior to the teacher's arrival.

With submission of a trip report following the program, the teacher should submit an expense reimbursement form for up to US\$100 for incidental travel expenses, with receipts for items costing over \$25.00.

## **Host Chapter Responsibilities**

The hosting chapter will be responsible for organizing a program for the visiting educator, which must have major focus on binational center instruction or workshops, but could include English teaching training or programs at a local university, a local culture experience component, observation and participation in primary, secondary or community college ELT programs, or workshops with Ministry of Education officials. Home stays are recommended to the extent possible. In many cases the binational center or university can also provide additional stipends for the exchange teacher.

## **Application Process**

There is no deadline for applications; they will be accepted based on merit and on a first come, first served basis.

A prospective participant should work with the local Partners president, who will communicate this interest to the counterpart chapter. The bi-national center will be contacted to approve the sending or the receiving of a teacher. The prospective teacher should then complete the Travel Exchange Grant Application and submit it to Partners Washington, D.C. at least six (6) weeks in advance of the proposed travel. The online application will require the following documents and information:

- 1) The teacher's Curriculum Vitae (CV) or resume and a copy of the teacher's Passport.
- 2) Letters of endorsement by both Partners' chapters and the bi-national center.
- 3) A detailed program plan or workshop/seminar schedule for the U.S. secondary or university linguistics or language teacher in the north to south exchange; or a detailed course-work and training program for visiting binational center teacher in a south to north exchange. The program should include plans for a local culture experience component. Residencies, south-north and north-south, must include at least four weeks of professional experience, and should always involve English language training and methodology with emphasis on sharing American culture to "bring to life" English teaching.

- 4) Specific information indicating that adequate living and financial arrangements have been made for the visiting teacher. This includes naming the host institution, the project director, the home stay host(s) and clearly indicate that housing, food, transportation and other necessities will be provided by the hosting chapter.

There is not a pre-determined number of Teacher-in-Residence applicants to be awarded each year. Each application will be judged on its own merits, and is subject to the availability of funding at that time. Because of limited resources, usually only one Teacher-In-Residence program per chapter each year can be funded.

### **Suggestions for Programming a Teacher-In-Residence:**

- Contact colleges and universities, language schools, community centers, ethnic centers, and other institutions which might be interested in hosting or sponsoring the teacher from the bi-national center.
- Schedule for the teacher should involve cultural events (like community cultural activities, folk festivals, visiting community service institutions, etc.). Arrangements should be made for the teacher to meet and work with other teachers in his/her field whenever possible.
- Contact local school officials. They might be able to assist in the planning, scheduling, and promotion of this project.
- Local newspapers should also receive a press release advising them of the activity. This is the kind of human interest story they like to write about.
- The teacher should be fully informed well in advance about the exact nature of the financial commitments and other arrangements so that there will be no misunderstanding about the program arrangements and costs.

### **Cultural Experience:**

The Teacher-in-Residence schedule should incorporate a local cultural experience component which will give the visitor the opportunity to become acquainted with educational, political, cultural and social institutions, organizations and family life. After returning home, the teacher will be able to create teaching sessions based on these cultural experiences. The program should include homestays and some participation in voluntary activities that will show the teachers how community volunteers support the schools, and vice versa. Partners feels it is very important that the teachers not only understand and experience the importance of volunteer service to the recipient community, but that they also make a personal contribution to their hosting chapter by becoming involved in Partners' activities before and after the educational exchange. Partnerships should work with local hosts to try to encourage follow-up activities, particularly through distance education and student-to-student, school-to-school, and teacher-to-teacher e-mail exchanges unitizing the new technologies.

An additional objective of this portion of the program is to provide information about the host country, the Partners chapter and their counterpart chapter through public speaking presentations, including slide shows and discussions. Educational institutions should consider the teachers as valuable resources for educating the host community about the teacher's country, and involve them

creatively in local community or campus events. Host families could be recruited in the school or university area to support Partners membership, and the program should, to the extent possible, include visits to and/or observation of PTA meetings, local arts and cultural events, professional and civic association meetings.

**Visas:**

Teachers should travel on a J-1 Visa as a volunteer. Partners chapters in the south should inform the U.S. Embassy's Cultural Affairs Officer in their country about this exchange prior to the teacher's departure. This contact may also facilitate the process of obtaining a U.S. visa for the selected teacher, and contribute to future educational exchanges. Teachers from the north should also make a courtesy call on the Cultural Affairs office, if possible.

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