

WEST AFRICAN RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

The West African Research Association (WARA) is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization founded in 1989. WARA has two central purposes. The first is to develop American expertise on West Africa by providing opportunities for learning and research in and about the region to U.S. students and educators. The second purpose is to enhance collaborative research and scholarly and educational exchange and understanding between U.S. scholars, educators, and institutions and their West African counterparts. WARA's overseas office, the West African Research Center (WARC), is located in Dakar, Senegal. It is the only such center located in sub-Saharan Africa. WARC provides an institutional presence and lends continuity and stability to programs in the region that are sponsored by post-secondary U.S. institutions.

The objectives of the WARA project are to: 1) encourage interest in international affairs and careers among American graduate students; 2) disseminate information on West Africa-related research issues; 3) provide U.S. and West African scholars access to research resources and expand research opportunities; 4) award fellowships to both American and West African scholars and students; 5) create a point of contact for U.S. and West African researchers allowing for the productive intersection of their respective research traditions; 6) reinforce institutions on both sides of the Atlantic; 7) foster collaborative research efforts and projects; 8) supplement documentation resources; and 9) organize periodic seminars, symposia and conferences, where researchers, practitioners, artists and creative thinkers from different backgrounds can meet and exchange ideas and research results.

WARA is requesting a renewal of its USDE grant in order to continue the important work begun in its first decade of existence. Its principal activities in the next funding cycle will be its grants program, electronic information initiatives, and programs that aim to educate American students and scholars about Islam in contemporary Africa. WARA plays an important role in providing American students with both the analytical tools and pragmatic experience that facilitates their entry into such international fields as policy-making, business, development, diplomacy, consulting, public health, and conflict resolution. The requested funding would support in particular the operations of WARC, with modest funding going toward the WARA U.S. headquarters, research initiatives, and grant programs.