

AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR YEMINI STUDIES

Applicant: The American Institute for Yemeni Studies (AIYS), a not-for-profit (501(c)3) consortium of colleges, universities, and museums established in 1978, is the only U.S.-based multi-disciplinary overseas research center in the Arabian peninsula. The area of is of great importance for U.S. strategic interests, and among its neighbors Yemen has been uniquely open to scholars and offers extraordinary opportunities for research, international exchange, and long-term scholarly cooperation and continues to be so even in the current difficult international situation. Through its office in the U.S. and its overseas research center in Yemen AIYS promotes pre- and post-doctoral research, scholarly exchanges, area studies, and Arabic language study through its scholarly support program, its fellowship competitions, its documentation, publication, and outreach programs, and the cooperative ventures it has undertaken with Yemeni counterparts and other international agencies.

AIYS operates in Yemen under bilateral agreements with agencies of the Yemeni government that require it to be the official sponsor for all U.S. researchers active in Yemen. AIYS' Resident Director in Sana'a processes the research and visa permissions scholars must have through the official bureaucracy and provides orientation and professional contacts. In its Sana'a center AIYS provides American students and researchers from a wide range of academic disciplines and diverse institutional backgrounds with suitable library, working, and hostel facilities, and with a forum for contacts and exchanges with other U.S. researchers, with Yemeni colleagues and government officials, and with scholars from other countries.

Constituency: AIYS serves a wide and diverse constituency; its programs and support services are available to all U.S. researchers, both in Yemen and in the U.S., regardless of source of funding or institutional affiliation, and are provided without consideration of gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Federally-funded fellowships for research and for Arabic language study have in recent years resulted in an influx of American students and scholars to this important and under-studied region. These fellowships have also attracted to Yemen a number of researchers whose work had previously focused on other areas, including the other countries of the Middle East, East Africa, the Indian Ocean littoral, and Indonesia, thus broadening enormously the disciplinary reach and the potential for information exchange both among U.S. scholars and with researchers of other nationalities who use AIYS' Sana'a center.

Funding: AIYS derives more than 50 percent of its funding from U.S. sources, including: the dues of institutional and individual members, individual and corporate donations in cash and in kind, and grants made by private foundations and public agencies. Program funding comes from the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Since 1994 the Department of Education has supported AIYS programs and operations through grants made under the AORC program. With AORC grants AIYS has established a modest, efficient, and cost-effective administrative structure that has enhanced the quality of previously-established AIYS programs, has added new fellowship programs that would have been difficult to administer previously, and has enlarged the scope of its scholarly support programs in both the U.S. and Yemen. Federal support has been critical to this endeavor and has allowed AIYS to marshal additional private resources in the form of professional expertise freely donated, corporate support for AIYS exchange and publication programs, and third-party funds and logistical support for specific projects, thus leveraging the impact of federal funding far beyond the actual dollar value of the grants. AIYS now requests support under the AORC program so that it can continue to provide effectively the functions and program services necessary to support the greatly expanded program level that has developed since 1995 in the present demanding environment.