

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

collected; and (4) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or the use of other forms of information technology.

Title: Program Evaluation of VA's Education Programs.

OMB Control Number: None assigned.

Type of Review: New collection.

Abstract: The purpose of this project is to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of three education programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs: Montgomery GI Bill (Title 38 U.S.C., Chapter 30); Montgomery GI Bill for Selected Reserves (Title 10 U.S.C., Chapter 1606); and Dependents' Education Assistance

(Title 38 U.S.C., Chapter 35). The telephone surveys will determine the extent to which each program meets its statutory intent and the expectations of veterans, school officials, legislators, and program officials. The surveys will also examine how well the programs are poised to meet the needs of veterans in the early 21st century and make recommendations as to how best to meet these needs. They will also make an independent, unbiased assessment and recommendation on a strategy to continue to deliver the best possible educational benefits and services at the least cost to all users of education benefits under these three programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Affected Public: Individuals or households—Business or other for profit.

Estimated Annual Burden: 2,240 hours.

Estimated Time Per Respondent: 16 minutes.

Frequency of Response: One-time.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 8,400.

Dated: October 15, 1998.

By direction of the Secretary.

Sandra S. McIntyre,

Program Analyst Information Management Service.

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