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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Notice of Intent To Request an Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) implementing regulations, this notice announces the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service's (CSREES) intention to request an extension of a currently approved information collection, Form CSREES-667 "Proposal Cover Sheet", and Form CSREES-668, "Project Summary."

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received on or before July 22, 2004, to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Address all comments regarding this notice to Louise Ebaugh, Deputy Administrator, Office of Extramural Programs, CSREES, USDA, STOP 2299, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-2299. E-mail: *RFP-OEP@csrees.usda.gov*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Louise Ebaugh, (202) 720-9181.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Grant Application Forms for the Small Business Innovation Research Grants Program.

OMB Number: 0524-0025.

Expiration Date of Approval: October 31, 2004.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved information collection for three years.

Abstract: In 1982, the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program

was authorized by Public Law 97-219, and in 1992 reauthorized through October 1, 2000, by Public Law 102-564. In 2000, the SBIR program was reauthorized through September 30, 2008, by Public Law 106-554. This Legislation requires each Federal agency with a research or research and development budget in excess of \$100 million to establish an SBIR program. The objectives of the SBIR Program are to stimulate technological innovation in the private sector, strengthen the role of small businesses in meeting Federal research and development needs, increase private sector commercialization of innovations derived from Department of Agriculture (USDA)-supported research and development efforts, and foster and encourage participation by women-owned and socially and economically disadvantaged small business firms in technological innovation. The Program is carried out in three separate phases. The purpose of Phase I is to determine the scientific or technical feasibility of ideas; Phase II is the principal research or research and development effort; and Phase III is to stimulate technological innovation and national return on investment from research through the pursuit of commercial objectives resulting from work carried out in Phases I and II.

USDA conducts its SBIR program through the use of grant awards and these grants are administered by the Awards Management Branch, Office of Extramural Programs, CSREES. Each year for which funding is available, USDA issues an SBIR program solicitation requesting Phase I applications. These applications are evaluated by peer review panels and awarded on competitive basis. The SBIR Program Solicitation requests that applicants submit applications following the format outlined in the Small Business Administration (SBA) Policy Directive. This simplified and standardized application format is used by all of the Federal agencies participating in the SBIR Program in order to reduce the application burden of small business firms that wish to apply to more than one agency.

Before awards can be made, certain information is required from applicants as part of an overall application package. This information includes project summaries, descriptions of the

research or teaching efforts, literature reviews, curricula vitae of project directors, other relevant technical aspects of the proposed project, and supporting documentation of an administrative and budgetary nature. Because of the nature of the competitive, peer-reviewed process, it is important that information from applicants be available in a standardized format to ensure equitable treatment.

This program also uses forms approved in the OMB-approved collection of information package 0524-0039. These forms include Form CSREES-2004, "Budget;" Form CSREES-2006, "National Environmental Policy Act Exclusions Form;" and Form CSREES-2008, "Assurance Statement(s)."

Forms CSREES-667, "Phase I and Phase II Proposal Cover Sheet;" and CSREES-668, "Phase I and Phase II Project Summary" are used to obtain USDA recordkeeping data, required certifications, and information used to respond to inquiries from Congress, other Government agencies, and the grantee community concerning grant projects supported by the USDA SBIR Program.

The following information has been collected and will continue to be collected:

Form CSREES-667—*Identification*, designates the research topic area under which an application is submitted for consideration; *USDA recordkeeping data*, provides names and addresses of project directors and authorized agents of small business firms; and *Certifications*, provides required certifications (e.g., the applicant qualifies as a small business for purposes of the SBIR program; the applicant qualifies as a minority and disadvantaged and/or women-owned small business).

Form CSREES-668—*Project summary*, provides a Technical Abstract used when releasing information about grant projects supported and keywords to identify the technology/research thrust/ commercial application of the projects.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 5.15 hours per response (1.4 hours and 3.75 hours for Forms CSREES-667 and CSREES-668, respectively). The average hours per

response is based on the hour burden as currently reported to OMB.

Respondents: Businesses or other for-profits.

Estimated Number of Responses per Form: 700 for Form CSREES-667 and 700 for Form CSREES-668. The estimate per form is based on the number of applications submitted in fiscal year 2003 to the SBIR Program rounded to the nearest hundred.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 3,605 hours, broken down by: 980 hours for Form CSREES-667 (1.4 hours per 700 respondents) and 2,625 hours for Form CSREES-668 (3.75 hours per 700 respondents).

Copies of this information collection can be obtained without charge from Melanie Krizmanich, Policy and Program Liaison Staff, CSREES, (202) 401-1762. e-mail: *RFP-OEP@csrees.usda.gov*.

Comments: Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Comments should be sent to the address stated in the preamble.

Comments also may be submitted directly to OMB and should be addressed to: Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20502.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Done in Washington, DC, this 2nd day of May, 2004.

Joseph J. Jen,

Under Secretary, Research, Education, and Economics.

[FR Doc. 04-11179 Filed 5-17-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Nutrition Service

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request; FNS-46, Issuance Reconciliation Report

AGENCY: Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice invites the general public and other public agencies to comment on proposed information collection contained in Form FNS-46, Issuance Reconciliation Report.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before July 19, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Send comments and requests for copies of this information collection to: Lizbeth Silbermann, Chief, Electronic Benefit Transfer Branch, Benefit Redemption Division, Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 3101 Park Center Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lizbeth Silbermann, Chief, Electronic Benefits Transfer Branch, (703) 305-2523.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Form FNS-46, Issuance Reconciliation Report.

OMB Number: 0584-0080.

Form Number: FNS-46.

Expiration Date: 11/30/2004.

Type of Request: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: Section 7(d) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (the Act) (7 U.S.C.

2016 (d)) requires State agencies to report on their benefit issuance operations not less than monthly. Section 11(a) of the Act (7 U.S.C. 2020(a)) requires State agencies to assume responsibility for the issuance, control, and accountability of benefits. Regulations at 7 CFR 274.4(a) and 274.4(b)(2) require State agencies to account for all issuance through the reconciliations process and to submit a report on this process using Form FNS-46, Issuance Reconciliation Report. These reports must be submitted to the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) monthly and must reach FNS no later than 90 days following the end of each report month. The FNS-46 report reflects the total issuance, returns, and unauthorized issuance amounts resulting in the net Federal obligation. The proposed revision to the information collection burden associated with FSP Form FNS-46, Issuance Reconciliation Report, reflects a reduction because of the requirement in section 7 (i) of the Act (7 U.S.C. 2016 (i)) for State agencies to change from coupon to EBT systems. States that implement EBT systems usually reduce their issuance reconciliation points to a single location. Therefore, the number of respondents and responses declines as the number of States with EBT systems increases.

Estimate of Burden: Currently, over 96 percent of FSP benefits are delivered via EBT; but by October 2004, we expect all States to have replaced their coupon systems with EBT systems. The total State agency respondent estimate is 1,152 for the Form FNS-46, Issuance Reconciliation Report, a reduction of 1,656 respondents from 2,808 respondents.

Affected Public: State and local government employees or contractors.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 96.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 12.

Estimated Time per Response: 8 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Burden: 9,216 hours annually.

Dated: May 11, 2004.

Roberto Salazar,

Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service.

[FR Doc. 04-11216 Filed 5-17-04; 8:45 am]

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