

awards (grants or cooperative agreements) resides with the USIA grants officer.

Review Criteria

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered, and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. Overall Quality: Proposals should exhibit substance and originality, consonant with the highest standards of American teaching and scholarship. Program should reflect an overall design whose various elements are coherently and thoughtfully integrated. Lectures and panels, taken as a whole, should offer a balanced presentation of issues, reflecting both the continuity of the American experience as well as the diversity and dynamism inherent in it.

2. Program Planning: Proposals should demonstrate careful planning. The organization and structure of the institute should be clearly delineated and be fully responsive to all program objectives. The travel component should be an integral and substantive part of the program, reinforcing and complementing its academic segment.

3. Institutional Capacity: Proposed personnel, including faculty and administrative staff as well as outside presenters, should be fully qualified to achieve the project's goals. Library and media resources should be accessible to participants; housing, transportation and other logistical arrangements should be fully adequate to the needs of participants and should be conducive to a collegial atmosphere.

4. Diversity: Proposals should demonstrate the recipient's commitment to promoting the awareness and understanding of diversity throughout the program. This can be accomplished through documentation, such as a written statement, summarizing past and/or on-going activities and efforts that further the principle of diversity within the organization and its activities. Program activities that address this issue should be highlighted.

5. Experience: The proposal should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange program activity, indicating the experience that the organization and its professional staff have had in working with foreign educators.

6. Evaluation and Follow-up: The proposal should include a plan for evaluating activities during the Institute and at its conclusion. Proposals should comment on provisions made for follow-up with returned grantees as a

means of establishing longer-term individual and institutional linkages.

7. Administration and Management: The proposals should indicate evidence of continuous on-site administrative and managerial capacity as well as the means by which program activities will be implemented.

8. Cost Effectiveness: The proposals should maximize cost-sharing through direct institutional contributions, in-kind support, and other private sector support. Overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible.

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 budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

Notification

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, and allocated and committed through internal USIA procedures.

Dated: October 24, 1997.

Robert L. Earle,

Deputy Associate Director for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0582]

Proposed Information Collection Activity: Proposed Collection; Comment Request; Reinstatement

AGENCY: Office Financial Management, Office of Management, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Office of Financial Management (OFM), Office of Management, 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 reinstatement, without change, of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired, and allow 60 days for public comment in response to the notice. This notice solicits comments on requirements relating to Federal agencies collecting Internal Revenue Service (IRS) 1099 tax reporting and Federal 1057 socio-economic information on Federal I.M.P.A.C. (International Merchant Purchase Authorization Card) credit card transactions.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before December 29, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on the collection of information to Martha Orr, Office of Financial Management (047F), Office of Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0582" in any correspondence.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Martha Orr at (202) 273-9447.

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, comments are invited on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of the burden estimate 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 Form Numbers: Request for IRS 1099-MISC Tax Collection and Federal 1057 Socio-Economic Status, VA Form Letter 4-555.

OMB Control Number: 2900-0582.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: Federal agencies are required to collect Internal Revenue

Service (IRS) 1099 tax reporting and Federal 1057 socio-economic information on Federal I.M.P.A.C. (International Merchant Purchase Authorization Card) credit card transactions. The VA, with the assistance of an outside entity, sends VA Form Letter 4-555 to collect the necessary information from merchants the Federal government has done business with using the I.M.P.A.C. credit card. The form letter supports the validity and urgency for the collection of information and provides a standardized format for reporting. The General Services Administration (GSA) could not issue this type of collection of information at this time, due to the current re-procurement status for the purchase credit card.

It is essential to the VA's reporting requirements that this type of information be collected for our I.M.P.A.C. card transactions. By law, VA as well as all Federal agencies, must report 1099 status and also have requirements to report the socio-economic status of the merchants with whom we do business.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit.

Estimated Annual Burden: 62,500 hours.

Estimated Average Burden Per Respondent: 5 minutes.

Frequency of Response: Annually.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 750,000.

Dated: October 7, 1997.

By direction of the Secretary.

Barbara Epps,

Management Analyst, Information Management Service.

[FR Doc. 97-28717 Filed 10-29-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0012]

Proposed Information Collection Activity: Proposed Collection; Comment Request; Extension

AGENCY: Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), 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 extension of a currently approved collection, and allow 60 days for public comment in response to the notice. This notice solicits comments on the application for cash surrender or policy loan on Government Life Insurance.

DATES: Written comments and recommendations on the proposed collection of information should be received on or before December 29, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Submit written comments on the collection of information to Nancy J. Kessinger, Veterans Benefits Administration (20S52), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0012" in any correspondence.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nancy J. Kessinger at (202) 273-8310 or FAX (202) 273-5981.

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, VBA invites comments on: (1) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of VBA's functions, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) the accuracy of VBA'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 and Form Numbers: Application for Cash Surrender or Policy Loan, VA Form 29-1546.

OMB Control Number: 2900-0012.

Type of Review: Reinstatement, without change, of a previously approved collection for which approval has expired.

Abstract: The form is used by the insured to apply for cash surrender value or policy loan on his/her Government Life Insurance. The information is used by the VBA to process the insured's request for a loan or cash surrender.

Affected Public: Individuals or households.

Estimated Annual Burden: 4,939 hours.

Estimated Average Burden Per Respondent: 10 minutes.

Frequency of Response: On occasion.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 29,636.

Dated: October 7, 1997.

By direction of the Secretary.

Barbara Epps,

Management Analyst, Information Management Service.

[FR Doc. 97-28718 Filed 10-29-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0377]

Agency Information Collection Activities Under OMB Review

AGENCY: Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995 (44 U.S.C., 3501 *et seq.*), this notice announces that the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Department of Veterans Affairs, has submitted the collection of information abstracted below to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and comment. The PRA submission describes the nature of the information collection and its expected cost and burden; it includes the actual data collection instrument.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before December 1, 1997.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR A COPY OF THE SUBMISSION CONTACT: Ron Taylor, Information Management Service (045A4), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20420, (202) 273-8015 or FAX (202) 273-5981. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0377."

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Claim for Repurchase of Loan, VA Form 26-8084.

OMB Control Number: 2900-0377.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: Under 38 CFR 36.4600(d), the holder of a delinquent vendee account is legally entitled to repurchase of the loan by VA when the loan has been continuously in default for 3 months and the amount of the delinquency equals or exceeds the sum of 2 monthly installments. When