

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Cooperative State Research,  
Education, and Extension Service****Notice of Intent to Extend 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, this notice announces the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service's (CSREES) intention to request an extension for three years for a currently approved information collection in support of the CSREES Buildings and Facilities Grants Program. **DATES:** Comments on this notice must be received by June 27, 1997, to be assured of consideration.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS:** Contact Sally J. Rockey, Deputy Administrator, Competitive Research Grants and Awards Management, CSREES, USDA, STOP 2240, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-2240, (202) 401-1766. E-mail: OEP@reeusda.gov.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Title:* CSREES/Buildings and Facilities Grants Program, Program Guidelines and Forms Package.

*OMB Number:* 0524-0029.

*Expiration Date of Current Approval:* August 31, 1997.

*Type of Request:* Extension of a currently approved information collection.

*Abstract:* The enabling legislation for the Research Facilities Program is contained in Pub. L. No. 88-74 (7 U.S.C. 390 *et seq.*) and the annual Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act provides funding to the CSREES for the support of construction grant projects. Project recipients (and funding levels for each) are identified in the annual House and Senate Conference Reports. Due to the high cost of constructing facilities, funding for each project normally is provided by Congress on an incremental basis over a period of several years.

Prior to the actual award of funds, targeted recipients are contacted and asked to submit information to CSREES relating to their projects. In the first year, the information collected from each prospective recipient is used by a team of subject-matter experts to conduct an on-site visit to determine the

need for the proposed facility; results of the study are reported to Congress.

Where funding is provided by Congress in subsequent years, applicants are not required to repeat information provided in a previous year—instead, CSREES requests updated information, focusing on any changes in construction plans, progress made in completing the facility, problems encountered, and current financial data. This information is used to determine grantee compliance with the purposes of the original grant award (or to approve minor changes necessitated by altered circumstances), determine whether the project is on schedule and within budget, and provide a means to justify further financial support. On a one-time basis, each grantee also is required to submit environmental information and a certificate of facility completion, both of which are included in the Program Guidelines or Forms Package.

The fundamental purposes of the forms included in the Forms Package are to facilitate the submission of proposals by applicant institutions; to ensure that information is supplied in an informative manner to enhance understanding by CSREES officials so that proposals can be processed more quickly; and to see that parallel information is received for each project to ensure equitable treatment for all recipients. The information is used by CSREES officials and outside reviewers to evaluate the technical, financial, and administrative merit of proposals and to respond to inquiries from Congress, the Department, and the grantee community. However, the forms are not designed to be statistical surveys or data collection instruments. The completion of the forms by potential recipients is a normal part of applying to CSREES for financial support. Without this information, CSREES would not be able to award these grant projects. This information collection is due to expire on August 31, 1997. CSREES intends to request an extension of three years. Upon approval, the following information will continue to be collected:

*Table of Contents:* A table of contents is optional; it is requested only for proposals of unusual length or complexity and provided at the discretion of the institution. It is used to facilitate the location of information by merit reviewers and CSREES officials.

*Project Summary:* This is a short summary of the project that focuses on the broad goals associated with the construction effort. It is required to enable CSREES to provide project-related information to Congress, the

Department, and the general public in a timely fashion.

*Project Description:* Applicants are asked to provide brief information on the scope of the proposed project, factors that led to a need for the construction, ways in which financial assistance from CSREES will enhance programmatic activities to be carried out in the facility, benefits to be gained from commencing the project during the current fiscal year, a general description of the physical site upon which it is planned to erect the facility, a description of any preliminary work that has been performed to date, an outline of plans to obtain any required licenses or permits, a description of the facility as it is envisioned to be completed, capacity of existing utility systems to service the new space, an outline of any problems that could delay the start or completion of the project, procedures to be used in accomplishing project objectives, and a tentative schedule for completing major activities associated with the effort. This information provides merit reviewers and agency officials with an understanding of the applicant's need for undertaking the project and establishes a basis for possible Federal financial support. In addition, it is used to respond to Congressional requests for specific project information and to assist CSREES program officials in familiarizing themselves with the project prior to making pre- and post-award site visits.

*Program Description:* Information is requested on the programs that are proposed to be housed in the completed space, including new or enhanced programs, and the relevance of these programs to research and allied work in the food and agricultural sciences. This information is required to ensure compliance with Conference Report language, which requires that programs to be carried out in these facilities be complementary to overall Departmental programs. This information also is required to be sure that the proposed programs do not unnecessarily duplicate programs being conducted elsewhere within the institution's State or region.

*Management Structure:* This calls for description of the organizational management structure that is planned for the completed facility. The purpose of requesting such information is to ensure that viable management, integrated with the rest of the institution, will be in place so that the facility and the programs it is intended to house will function properly after the facility becomes operational. It also demonstrates the level of institutional

thought that has gone into planning the facility, thereby helping to justify Federal financial support to assist in constructing the facility.

*Alternative:* Applicants are asked to outline alternatives to the proposed facility that were considered by the institution prior to settling upon the one at hand. This information is used by merit reviewers and CSREES officials to determine whether or not the project being considered for funding is the best alternative vis-a-vis other options.

*Contingency Plan:* This is an outline of the institution's fallback plan to fund the facility from other sources in the event Federal funding is delayed, is reduced significantly, or is not forthcoming. It provides merit reviewers and CSREES officials with important information relating to the priority of the facility on the institution's master plan. (Is the facility of such high priority that the institution is committed to constructing it regardless of funding source, or will it abandon the project unless Federal funds are provided?)

*Operating Costs:* Applicants are asked to describe their plans for operating and maintaining the facility after construction has been completed, including the source(s) of operating funds. This is required in response to Congressional language requiring that recipients be willing and able to operate and maintain the facility with non-Federal funds after occupancy.

*Biographical Information:* A brief biographical sketch (or curriculum vitae) is required for key institutional personnel who are expected to be involved in the project. This information is needed to persuade merit reviewers and CSREES officials that institutional personnel assigned to planning and overseeing completion of the facility are qualified to do so. This sketch normally does not have to be written for the proposal being submitted—all project leaders develop and keep curricula vitae on file to be used as the need arises.

*Administrative Certifications:* Applicants are required by law or regulation to complete administrative certifications to assist in determining their eligibility for Federal funds.

*Environmental Assessment:* This information is requested, on a one-time basis, of all grantees prior to their being authorized to take irreversible action on a project (e.g., site clearing or groundbreaking). The information is necessary to assist CSREES in complying with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) and implementing regulations promulgated by the Council on Environmental

Quality at 40 CFR Parts 1500–1508, as adopted and supplemented by USDA at 7 CFR 1b and by CSREES at 7 CFR Part 3407. While there is no prescribed format that must be used in submitting this information, CSREES developed a suggested format to assist in focusing grantees' attention on salient issues that need to be addressed.

*CSREES-850—Grant Application—Facilities Project:* This form is the cover sheet of each application and provides base-line information relating to the applicant institution and the construction project for which funding is targeted. This information serves as part of CSREES' statistical data base for the dissemination of information to Congress, the Department, and other interested parties. In addition, the signatures at the bottom of the page provide legal assurance that the proposed project is sanctioned by top-level officials of the institution.

*CSREES-851—Budget—Facilities Project:* This form provides a breakdown of planning and construction funds requested from CSREES, as well as those that are intended to be provided from non-Federal funds. This information permits CSREES officials to review the applicant's proposed financial expenditure plan to evaluate the reasonableness and allowability of costs being proposed.

*CSREES-852—Current and Pending Support—Facilities Project:* This form requests a listing of all recent, current, and/or pending support for the construction or renovation of program facilities from a source external to the applicant institution. This information allows CSREES officials to determine whether or not the construction funding being requested duplicates (or overlaps with) similar construction projects funded by one or more other sponsors.

*CSREES-853—Program Certification—Facilities Project:* This form collects minimal information to ensure applicant compliance with the Food Disaster Protection Act of 1973, Pub. L. No. 93-234 (42 U.S.C. 4001-4128) and implementing regulations established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (44 CFR Part 75); and the Coastal Barrier Resources Act, Pub. L. No. 97-348 (16 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.*), as amended. This information is required by Federal Law. However, this form is not required for follow-on applications unless the construction site has changed.

*CSREES-854—Data Sheet—Facilities Project:* This form requests statistical information about the project (its purpose, size, cost, level of matching funds, schedule, and future funding needs). It is used to provide information

to Congress and the Department, to facilitate monitoring efforts, and to determine project growth.

*CSREES-860—Certificate of Facility Completion:* This is a two-sided form that is required on a one-time basis but it is not submitted as part of the actual grant application. The first side is a certificate, prepared and signed by the design team, attesting to physical attributes of the facility; and the reverse of the form, completed by the grantee, is a certification of occupancy and list of programs to be housed in the new space. This information is required to provide a record of final inspection and acceptance of the facility by the owner and also to ensure that the programs for which the facility was constructed will actually occupy the facility during the period of Federal financial interest.

*Estimate of Burden:* Public reporting burden for: an initial grant proposal is estimated to average 22 hours per response; a follow-on application is estimated to average 10 hours per response; an environmental assessment is estimated to average 10 hours per response; and Form CSREES-860, Certification of Facility Completion, is estimated to average 2 hours per response.

*Respondents:* Organizations identified in the annual House and Senate Conference Reports.

*Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent:* The FY 1998 estimate on the number of responses per respondent is based on numbers associated with FY 1997 funding. As such, the estimated number of respondents are one initial proposal, 19 follow-on applications, 42 environmental assessments, and 14 for Form CSREES-860.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents:* 300 hours, broken down by: 22 hours for the initial proposal (22 hours per one respondent); 190 hours for follow-on applications (10 hours per 19 respondents); 420 hours for the environmental assessment (10 hours per 42 respondents); and 28 hours for the Form CSREES-860 (two hours per 14 respondents).

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Melanie Krizmanich, Policy and Program Liaison Staff, CSREES, (202) 401-1762. E-mail: OEP@reeusda.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 may be sent to: Sally J. Rockey, Deputy Administrator, Competitive Research Grants and Awards Management, CSREES, USDA, STOP 2240, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-2240, (202) 401-1766. E-mail: OEP@reeusda.gov.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request

for OMB approval. All comments also will become a matter of public record.

Done at Washington, DC, on this 15th day of April 1997.

**B.H. Robinson,**

*Administrator, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.*

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