

acres: 5 percent). It is expected that implementation of the NER plan will cost approximately \$50.6 million with an average annual cost of approximately \$3.3 million.

13. The costs of project implementation for the hurricane and storm damage reduction features and ecosystem restoration features will be shared by the Federal government and the non-Federal project partner (NJDEP) on a 65 percent/35 percent basis. All operations and maintenance costs will be borne by the non-Federal project partner. For the hurricane and storm damage reduction features, the project implementation costs will be shared as follows: \$40,608,700 Federal and \$21,866,200 non-Federal with annual O&M costs of \$221,500 (non-Federal). This includes mitigation costs associated with the implementation of these features (\$2,865,300 total with \$1,862,400 Federal and \$1,002,900 non-Federal). For the ecosystem restoration features, the project implementation costs \$50,552,800 million will be shared with \$32,859,300 Federal and \$17,693,500 non-Federal with O&M costs of \$80,000 (non-Federal).

14. Potential beneficial cumulative impacts to migratory waterfowl and songbirds are likely to result from implementation of the selected mitigation and ecosystem restoration plans. These plans, in conjunction with similar projects in the South River watershed, should increase the overall ecological value of the area. Specifically, the mitigation and restoration plans will add large areas of more desirable wetland communities and increase the study area's biodiversity (i.e., improve the areas composition and abundance of plant and animal species).

15. The construction and maintenance of both the hurricane and storm damage reduction measures and the ecosystem restoration measures will not negatively impact any Federally or state listed endangered or threatened species, areas of designated critical habitat, or essential fish habitat. By providing increased cover and opportunities for foraging and nesting, the selected plans will also improve habitat for the Federally listed threatened bald eagle thought to utilize habitats in the general vicinity, and for many of the State of New Jersey endangered and threatened species observed in the restoration area (e.g., black skimmer, northern harrier, peregrine falcon, yellow-crowned night heron, osprey, black-crowned night heron, and American bittern).

16. In sum, the recommended plan will efficiently reduce hurricane and storm damages along the South River

and improve the structure and function of degraded ecosystems in the study area. The non-Federal project partner, NJDEP, has indicated its support for the recommended plan and is willing to enter into a Project Cooperation Agreement with the Federal Government for the implementation of the plan. At this time, there are no known major areas of controversy or unresolved issues regarding the study and selected plan among agencies or the public interest.

**Len Houston,**

*Chief, Environmental Analysis Branch.*

[FR Doc. 02-14226 Filed 6-6-02; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3710-06-M**

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### Notice of proposed information collection requests

**AGENCY:** Department of Education.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed information collection requests.

**SUMMARY:** The Leader, Regulatory Information Management, Office of the Chief Information Officer, invites comments on the proposed information collection requests as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

**DATES:** An emergency review has been requested in accordance with the Act (44 U.S.C. Chapter 3507 (j)), since public harm is reasonably likely to result if normal clearance procedures are followed. Approval by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has been requested by June 12, 2002. A regular clearance process is also beginning. Interested persons are invited to submit comments on or before August 6, 2002.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments regarding the emergency review should be addressed to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Attention: Karen Lee, Desk Officer: Department of Education, Office of Management and Budget; 725 17th Street, NW., Room 10235, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503 or should be electronically mailed to the Internet address [Karen\\_F\\_Lee@omb.eop.gov](mailto:Karen_F_Lee@omb.eop.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Section 3506 of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35) requires that the Director of OMB provide interested Federal agencies and the public an early opportunity to comment on information collection requests. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) may amend or waive the requirement for public consultation to

the extent that public participation in the approval process would defeat the purpose of the information collection, violate State or Federal law, or substantially interfere with any agency's ability to perform its statutory obligations. The Leader, Information Management Group, Office of the Chief Information Officer, publishes this notice containing proposed information collection requests at the beginning of the Departmental review of the information collection. Each proposed information collection, grouped by office, contains the following: (1) Type of review requested, e.g., new, revision, extension, existing or reinstatement; (2) title; (3) summary of the collection; (4) description of the need for, and proposed use of, the information; (5) respondents and frequency of collection; and (6) reporting and/or recordkeeping burden. ED invites public comment. The Department of Education is especially interested in public comment addressing the following issues: (1) Is this collection necessary to the proper functions of the Department; (2) will this information be processed and used in a timely manner; (3) is the estimate of burden accurate; (4) how might the Department enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (5) how might the Department minimize the burden of this collection on respondents, including through the use of information technology.

Dated: June 3, 2002.

**John D. Tressler,**

*Leader, Regulatory Information Management, Office of the Chief Information Officer.*

### Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

*Type of Review:* New.

*Title:* Local-Flex Application.

*Abstract:* Application for local educational agencies (LEAs) seeking to enter into local flexibility demonstration agreements ("Local-Flex" agreements). By statute, the Department can select 80 LEAs through a competitive process with which to enter into Local-Flex agreements. These agreements give LEAs the flexibility to consolidate certain Federal education funds and to use those funds for any educational purpose permitted under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in order to meet the State's definition of adequate yearly progress (AYP) and specific measurable goals for improving student achievement and narrowing achievement gaps.

*Additional Information:* An emergency clearance is necessary to enable the Department to select Local-

Flex agreement LEAs by September 15 of this year. While LEAs may still have difficulty implementing the program during school year 2002–03, approval after the school year begins will surely delay implementation to the following year. In our view, harm to the public would thus occur if this clearance is not approved by June 12, 2002. The Department plans to make applications available by mid-June to allow applicants sufficient time to prepare their Local-Flex agreement. The Department would then have approximately one month to complete a peer review and negotiate final agreements with selected applicants.

*Frequency:* Semi-Annually.

*Affected Public:* State, Local, or Tribal Gov't, SEAs or LEAs.

*Reporting and Recordkeeping Hour Burden:*

*Responses:* 240.

*Burden Hours:* 19,200.

Requests for copies of the proposed information collection request may be accessed from <http://edicsweb.ed.gov>, by selecting the "Browse Pending Collections" link and by clicking on link number 2058. When you access the information collection, click on "Download Attachments" to view. Written requests for information should be addressed to Vivian Reese, Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 4050, Regional Office Building 3, Washington, DC 20202–4651 or to the e-mail address [vivan.reese@ed.gov](mailto:vivan.reese@ed.gov). Requests may also be electronically mailed to the Internet address [OCIO\\_RIMG@ed.gov](mailto:OCIO_RIMG@ed.gov) or faxed to 202–708–9346. Please specify the complete title of the information collection when making your request.

Comments regarding burden and/or the collection activity requirements, contact Kathy Axt at (540) 776–7742 or via her Internet address [Kathy.Axt@ed.gov](mailto:Kathy.Axt@ed.gov). Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–800–877–8339.

[FR Doc. 02–14289 Filed 6–6–02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000–01–P

## DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

[CFDA No.: 84.359A (Pre-Application) and 84.359B (Full Application)]

### Early Reading First Program; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal Year (FY) 2002

**SUMMARY:** The Secretary invites applications for new grant awards for FY 2002 for the Early Reading First

Program. These grants are authorized by subpart 2, part B, title I, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act, Public Law 107–110. The Secretary also announces final procedures, requirements, and priorities for this competition.

#### Purpose of Program

The purpose of the Early Reading First Program is to create preschool centers of excellence by improving the instruction and classroom environment of early childhood programs that are located in urban or rural high-poverty communities and that serve primarily children from low-income families. These programs will provide preschool age children, including children with disabilities and children with limited English proficiency, with high-quality environments and early reading curricula and activities, based on scientifically based reading research, to support the age-appropriate development of: oral language, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabetic knowledge. These activities (with tactile and communication accommodations for children with disabilities, as appropriate), in combination with professional development based on scientific research and with screening assessments, will form an integrated, coherent instructional program that will further children's language and literacy skills and prevent them from encountering reading difficulties when they enter school.

These grants complement the Reading First State Grants Program, which provides support for high-quality, scientifically based classroom-focused reading instruction for kindergarten through grade three. The Early Reading First Program is joined by several other significant endeavors that are designed to enhance the school readiness of young children, such as the Department's Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Grants Program, which is designed to improve the knowledge and skills of early childhood educators, and the Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research Grants Program, which will implement rigorous evaluations of preschool curricula to provide information to support informed choices of classroom curricula for early childhood programs.

Early Reading First grants will help support the President's new Early Childhood Initiative, by strengthening early learning environments and instruction for young children. These grants also will support that initiative by helping ensure that preschool

programs are more closely coordinated with State educational goals, including goals for kindergarten through grade 12, so that there is continuity with formal school instruction and so that what children are doing before they enter school is aligned with what is expected of them once they are in school.

Early Reading First grants will use research-based strategies to generate information about effective practices in providing children with the essential language, literacy, and cognitive experiences that will best prepare them for later school success. The Department plans to disseminate information about Early Reading First projects that prove to be effective models for early childhood education.

*Applications Available:* June 7, 2002.

*Deadline for Receipt of Applications:* Pre-Application: July 15, 2002 (by 4:30 p.m., if hand delivered). Full Application (for invited applicants only): October 11, 2002 (by 4:30 p.m., if hand delivered) (which is at least 6 weeks after the date applicants will be invited to submit Full Applications).

*Deadline for Intergovernmental Review:* December 10, 2002.

*Estimated Available Funds:* \$75,000,000.

*Estimated Range of Awards (per year):* \$250,000–\$1,500,000.

*Estimated Average Size of Awards (per year):* \$425,000 (based on 175 awards).

*Estimated Number of Awards:* 50–300.

**Note:** The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

*Project Period:* Up to three years.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

As the President's new Early Childhood Initiative recognizes, research demonstrates the strong relationship between high-quality educational experiences for children before kindergarten and their later success in school. The National Research Council report, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children* (1998), concludes that the majority of reading problems faced by today's adolescents and adults could have been avoided or resolved in the early years of childhood. The *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes* report (June 1999), partially funded by the Department, concludes that children's cognitive and social competence in the second grade can be predicted by the experiences that they had four years previously in child care, even after taking into account kindergarten and first-grade classroom experiences. The report also found that