OMB Forms Justification Package

Learn and Serve America Program and Performance Reporting System (LASSIE)

PART B: COLLECTION OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

The Agency should be prepared to justify its decision not to use statistical methods in any case where such methods might reduce burden or improve accuracy of results. When Item 17 on OMB Form 83-1 is checked "Yes," the following should be included in the Supporting Statement to the extent that it applies to the methods proposed:

B1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, state and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rate for the collection as a whole. If the collection has been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.

The Program and Performance Reporting System is designed to collect information from all institutions that have received Learn and Serve America funding. This includes grantees receiving funding directly from the Corporation; subgrantees receiving funds through the grantee organizations; and sub-subgrantees receiving grants from subgrantee organizations. The total number of respondents is estimated at 2100 organizations.

Because the Program and Performance Reporting System is part of the Corporation's annual reporting and accountability requirements, reports will be collected from all Learn and Serve funded organizations.

B2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including: (a) statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection, (b) estimation procedures, (c) degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification, (d) unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures, and (e) any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.

The data collection process is designed to identify and collect data from all Learn and Serve America grant recipients. There are no provisions for sampling.

B3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information must be shown to be adequate for intended use. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

The data collection process has been designed to maximize response and the accuracy of the data submitted to the system. The two major elements in the data collection process are (1) the notification and registration of grant recipients into the system, and (2) completion and collection of the annual report.

Notification and Registration.

Because of the flow-down nature of the Learn and Serve grants, the first task in the operation of the reporting system is the compilation of a listing of all Learn and Serve grant recipients and their registration on the system. This process takes place in a series of steps as each level of Learn and Serve recipients (grantees, subgrantees, sub-subgrantees) registers on the system and identifies any sub-recipients. Specific steps are as follows:

1. Basic contact information on the Corporation's direct Learn and Serve grantees (those receiving funds directly from the Corporation) and subgrantees are imported into the system from the Corporation's e-Grants system. Grantees are prompted by email (and follow-up emails or telephone calls as needed) to complete the Program Registration Form, to review the subgrantee listing and revise as needed to provide a final listing of their subgrantees. If grantees also operate a service-learning program directly or conduct training and technical assistance activities, they are prompted to complete the relevant sections of the Program Reporting Form.

2. Subgrantees are notified by email that they have been entered into the system and assigned a password, and are prompted to log on to the system and complete the Program Registration Form. Subgrantees are asked to provide information on any further sub-grants that they have made to other organizations (sub-subgrants) and to complete a Program Reporting Form as appropriate. The system's grant management software allows grantees to identify which of their subgrantees have not logged onto the system so that follow-up calls can be made.

3. Sub-subgrantees identified through the system receive notification by email and are prompted to log on the system to begin the reporting process. As at the grantee levels, the system's grant management software allows subgrantees to identify any of their grant recipients who have not logged on to the system so that they can follow-up with emails and/or telephone reminder calls.

At the conclusion of this process, the Corporation has a full listing of all grant recipients so that it can monitor compliance on a timely basis. Grantees and subgrantees are also able to access real-time status reports on their sub-recipients so that they can follow-up as needed to ensure that all of their subgrantees and sub-subgrantees are reporting as required.

Completion and Collection of the Annual Reports

The on-line data collection system is designed to provide an easy-to-use reporting interface and promote full and accurate reporting of program data. Several elements are built into the system to support those goals:

1. **The web-based interface is designed to promote ease of use**. Users are able to print a paper version of the Program Reporting Form and worksheets for use in collecting information prior to completing the forms on line. Users are able to save and return to a partially-completed report and to update reports prior to submission so that the reports can be completed as information is available. The web-based interface also includes links to definitions and instructions, so that users can make sure that they are providing appropriate information.

2. **The data entry form includes built-in checks to promote accurate reporting.** In key places (for example, counts of participants), the system includes checks that will prompt users when data is out of range, when data is in the wrong format or when percentages or numbers do not add up to the appropriate totals.

3. **Support for the system includes a variety of training and support activities aimed at responding to any data collection problems or concerns**. These support activities include training sessions for grantees and Corporation staff. A help page is provided on the website that includes a quick start guide and an on-line tutorial. The contractor provides email and telephone support on all technical questions, with a guaranteed response time of one working day for any question submitted. Learn and Serve program officers provide support to grantees on content-related questions.

B4. Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of data.

The previous version of the Program and Performance Report form (OMB # 3045-0095) was reviewed by members of the Practitioner Working Group. In addition, a small number of practitioners (fewer than 10) from Higher Education Institutions, Community-Based Organizations, and K-12 Schools and School Districts were asked to pilot test the Program and Performance Report form appropriate to their type of organization. Practitioner Working Group members also reviewed the web-based technology to make sure that it works as expected and to identify any instructions or procedures that are confusing or ambiguous. Draft reporting forms and web-based technology were also presented and discussed with grantees and subgrantees at two sets of workshops at the annual National Service-Learning Conference. This request is for approval of a revised Program and Performance Report form. This new form is nearly identical to the previously approved version, however it has been modified for clarity and to reduce burden based on three years of use and comments provided during the federal notice period.

B5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

The data will be collected and initial analysis conducted by Abt Associates, 55 Wheeler Street, Cambridge, MA 02138, The Center for Youth and Communities, Brandeis University, 415 South Street, Waltham, MA 02453, and RelyOn Media LLC, 12 Main Street, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370. Project Director for Abt Associates is JoAnn Jastrzab, 617-349-2372. Project Director for Brandeis University is Alan Melchior, 781-736-3775. Project Director for RelyOn Media is Chris Macek, 413-625-6009.