

Notes regarding a discussion on 200909-1810-002: Indian Education Professional Development Grants Program-GPRA and Service Payback Data Collection with OSERS regarding 1820-0622

The Office of Indian Education met with the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services divisions, OSERS, to discuss any comparisons and/or gather key notes and lessons learned during the use of OSERS Special Education-Institutional reporting on regulatory compliance related to the Personnel Preparation Program's Service Obligation, cleared by OMB under 1820-0622 which expires 11/30/2011.

OSERS payback requirements and the Indian Professional Development program are guided by different statutory requirements and program regulations. The two programs are not a fair comparison other than a form of payback as a requirement. The responsibility for payback is between the participant and the Dept. of ED/OIE. The grantee or college is not responsible for payback or tracking the employment of participants. The grantee simply provides OIE a signed payback agreement - designed by the individual university - from each participant and an amount of funding provided to the participant when he/she graduates or exits the program, the grantee is not involved. The grantee does not follow up. OESE does.

Another critical distinction between OSERS and OIE: participant tracking.

Based OSERS account of how participants are tracked, OIE and OSERS are widely different in that OIE tracks the participants internally, whereas, OSERS outsources this function to a private contractor and/or in some cases to the University in which the participant was enrolled in the program.

Furthermore, OSERS stated that their only involvement with the participant is when he/she has to be forwarded to debt management. There were other diminutive differences, but the central difference stems from how each program tracks the participant.

Based on discussion with OSERS, OESE has reviewed the service payback requirements of both the proposed 200909-1810-002: Indian Education Professional Development Grants Program-GPRA and Service Payback Data Collection and OSERS Special Education-Institutional reporting on regulatory compliance related to the Personnel Preparation Program's Service Obligation, cleared under 1820-0622 for any duplicative efforts and is confident in the use of technology to reduce burden, assurances of confidentiality and usage of data collected.

Background on 1820-0622

The Personnel Preparation program in Section 673(h) of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997 which requires individuals who receive a scholarship through personnel preparation projects funded under the Act subsequently to provide early intervention, special education or related services to children with disabilities or, for leadership personnel, work in the appropriate field for a period of two years for every year for which assistance was received. Scholarship recipients who do not satisfy their service obligation must repay all or part of the cost of their assistance in accordance with the regulations issued by the Secretary. These regulations implement requirements governing, among other things, the service obligation for scholars, oversight by grantees, repayment of scholarships, and procedures for obtaining deferrals or exemptions from service or repayment obligations. In order for the Federal government to implement these regulations, certain data collections, record keeping and reporting are necessary.

The December 9, 1999 regulations require the institutions of higher education (IHEs) grantees to document scholars' progress in programs and in their subsequent eligible employment. When scholars do not satisfy the requirements of the regulation and are required to repay part or all of their scholarship, IHEs are required to provide the Federal government with the information necessary to carry out the Secretary's functions. This Paperwork Act submission relates to grants that were awarded in FY2004 and earlier.

The Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 and the Service Obligation regulations published on June 5, 2006 transfer documentation of scholars' eligible employment from IHEs to the Federal government. After many delays, a contract will be awarded before the end of September 2007. The contractor will complete the development of a website and web-based data collection system that meets the Department's Certification and Accreditation requirements during the spring of 2008. Then, the contractor will collect the data required to fulfill the service obligation requirement of IDEA and the regulations.