

Contract No.: ED-IES-12-C-0004

**Supporting Justification  
for OMB Clearance of a  
Needs Sensing Survey  
under the Regional  
Educational Laboratory  
Program (REL)  
*Section A***

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**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
REQUEST FOR OMB CLEARANCE OF A NEEDS SENSING SURVEY  
UNDER THE REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY PROGRAM  
(REL)**

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) requests OMB clearance for a survey related to the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Program. ED, in consultation with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) and NORC at the University of Chicago under contract ED-IES-12-C-0004, has planned a needs assessment of educators in the seven states served by REL Midwest. OMB approval is being requested for an online survey of a sample of school board members, district administrators, principals, and teachers in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

The survey consists of a set of items to be asked of all respondents, including questions about priority needs both within the four main topical areas (college and career readiness, early childhood education, educator effectiveness, and low-performing schools and school improvement) and across a set of actual project concepts under consideration by REL Midwest (see Appendix A). The survey varies somewhat by respondent category (school board member, district administrator, principal, and teacher) since only principals and teachers are in a position to provide feedback on priority needs at the level of the school (see Appendix B).

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

The purpose of the sample survey, which will encompass the first three years of the contract, is to assess:

- the importance these populations attach to the four issues identified in advance by REL Midwest as priorities for the region (i.e., educator effectiveness, college and career

readiness, low-performing schools and school improvement, and early childhood education);

- for each issue, the types of data and analysis supports, and research and evaluation needs which respondents anticipate would be of particular value;
- what factors would increase the likelihood respondents and the populations they represent would turn to the REL for data and analysis supports, or research and evaluation needs in the future.

REL Midwest will use results of the survey to prioritize the assistance that REL Midwest provides to educators in the region for utilizing their longitudinal data systems, conducting high quality research and evaluation; learning about the best education research; and incorporating data into policy and practice.

More specifically, the survey will give respondents in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin an opportunity to provide REL Midwest and ED with information on the priority needs of the region. This includes feedback from stakeholders in each of the seven states served by REL Midwest on current levels of interest in the four priority areas (described above) that are the focus of REL Midwest's work, as well as stakeholder interest in important educational issues that fall under each of these four priority areas. Finally, respondents will be asked to provide feedback on a variety of specific activities that REL Midwest is planning to undertake over the next five years. Failure to collect this information might result in a misalignment of REL Midwest services and the needs of the educators they serve.

### **1. Circumstances Necessitating Collection of Information**

This data collection is authorized by the Educational Sciences Reform Act (ESRA) of 2002. Part D, Section 174(f)(3) of ESRA states that as part of their central mission and primary

function, each regional educational laboratory “shall support applied research, development, wide dissemination, and technical assistance activities by...developing a plan for identifying and serving the needs of the region by conducting a continuing survey of the educational needs, strengths, and weaknesses within the region.”

**2. How, by Whom, and for What Purpose Information Is to Be Used**

Results of the survey will be used by REL Midwest to help refine its understanding of regional needs and inform its future research, technical assistance, and dissemination work. Aggregate results also will be provided in reports to the U.S. Department of Education to inform ongoing efforts to identify and address high priority needs of educators across the nation.

**3. Use of Automated, Electronic, Mechanical or Other Technological Collection Techniques**

The data collection plan reflects sensitivity to issues of efficiency, accuracy, and respondent burden. Specifically, the survey is being conducted via the Web in order to reduce burden on respondents (i.e., completion of online surveys is less time intensive than completion of pencil-and-paper mail-out/mail-back surveys) and to increase response rates and facilitate analysis of the data collected (e.g., precoding items reduces time required to prepare data files).

**4. Efforts to Avoid Duplication of Effort**

This effort will yield unique data to identify and address the most pressing needs of educators in the Midwest region. There are no similar evaluations being conducted and there is no alternative source for the information to be collected.

**5. Sensitivity to Burden on Small Entities**

Sampling plans do not target specific schools or other small entities.

**6. Consequences to Federal Program or Policy Activities if the Collection is Not Conducted or Is Conducted Less Frequently than Proposed**

If the proposed data were not collected, IES would fail to fulfill its mandate in ESRA 2002 to identify and serve the educational needs of the Midwest region by conducting a continuing survey. Thus, federal resources would be allocated and program decisions would be made in the absence of valid evidence of the need for products and activities provided by REL Midwest to educators in the region.

**7. Special Circumstances**

There are no special circumstances.

**8. Federal Register Announcement and Consultation**

**a. Federal Register Announcement**

We will publish Federal Register Notices to allow both a 60-day and 30-day public comment period.

**b. Consultations Outside the Agency**

None.

**c. Unresolved Issues**

None.

**9. Payment or Gift to Respondents**

None.

**10. Confidentiality of the Data**

The data collection efforts that are the focus of this clearance package will be conducted in accordance with all relevant federal regulations and requirements. These include the Education

Sciences Reform Act of 2002, Title I, Part E, Section 183 that requires “All collection, maintenance, use, and wise dissemination of data by the Institute: to “conform with the requirements of section 552 of Title 5, United States Code, the confidentiality standards of subsections (c) of this section, and sections 444 and 445 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1232 g, 1232h).” These citations refer to the Privacy Act, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment.

Data to be collected will not be released with individual identifiers. Data will be presented in aggregate statistical form only. A statement to this effect is included in all advance materials and in the opening screen of the survey. The following safeguards are routinely employed by NORC to ensure confidentiality:

- All employees at NORC sign a confidentiality pledge (Appendix E) emphasizing its importance and describing their obligation.
- Access to sample selection data is limited to those who have direct responsibility for providing and maintaining sample locating information. At the conclusion of the research, these data are destroyed.
- Identifying information is maintained on separate forms and files, which are linked only by sample identification number.
- Access to the file linking sample identification numbers with the respondents’ ID and contact information is limited to a small number of individuals who have a need to know this information.
- Access to the hard copy documents is strictly limited. Documents are stored in locked files and cabinets. Discarded material is shredded.



- Computer data files are protected with passwords and access is limited to specific users. With especially sensitive data, the data are maintained on removable storage devices that are kept physically secure when not in use.

The Privacy Act of 1974 applies to this data collection. NORC will make certain that all surveys are held strictly confidential, as described above, and that in no instance will responses be made available except in tabular form.

#### **11. Additional Justification for Sensitive Questions**

No questions of a highly sensitive nature are included in the survey.

#### **12. Estimates of Hour Burden**

The total reporting burden associated with this data collection is 983 hours (See Table 1 below). Approximately 2,800 respondents will be contacted with a target response rate of 80%, and the approximate time required for each respondent to complete the online survey is 0.33 hours on average. An advance notification letter is estimated to add 3 minutes (0.05 hours) to participation in the survey (see Appendix C). There will also be one postcard and up to four email follow-ups (0.04 hours each) for individuals who do not respond to the initial letter (see Appendix D). For more detailed information on the sample, please refer to Table 3.

**Table 1: Administration Times**

	Reporting Method	Number of Respondents	Average Time (hours)	Total Burden (hours)
1.	A simple random sample of 2,800 educators in 4 groups across 7 states will be drawn from approximately 584,000 records. Each prospective respondent will be sent a letter notifying him/her of this opportunity to participate in the survey. Respondents who choose to opt out of the study at this stage will be replaced in the sample. For the purposes of calculating burden hours, NORC estimates 280 replacements may be required. Each of these 3,080 (2,800+280) initial contacts require an estimated 3 minutes of burden (0.05 hour).			
	Advance notification letter	3,080	.05	154
2.	If 1,400 of the 3,080 initial contacts agree to participate in the survey, then an estimated 1,400 contacts will require a postcard and email follow-up. Note again that this assumes 280 replacements made to the initial sample of 2,800. Estimated 2.5 minutes (0.04 hour) of respondent burden for each additional contact.			
	Postcard and email follow-up to advance letter	1,400	.04	56
3.	Of the 1,400 follow-up contacts, an estimated 560 additional individuals will agree to participate in the survey. Thus an estimated 840 contacts may require up to 3 additional email prompts. Estimated 2.5 minutes (0.04 hour) of respondent burden for each additional contact, with an estimated average of 2 additional prompts sent.			
	An average of two additional email prompts	840	.04	34
4.	Of the 840 follow-up contacts, an estimated 280 additional individuals will agree to participate in the survey. This results in a total of 2,240 participants at an estimated 20 minutes (0.33 hour) of respondent burden for completing the survey.			
	Completion of online survey	2,240	.33	739
<b>Total</b>				<b>983 hours</b>

The annualized cost to respondents (see Table 2 below) is calculated from the previous table by summing across items 1-3 to obtain the burden hours for gaining cooperation. Thus the burden hours per respondent for gaining cooperation from the total sample of 3,080 is  $(154 + 56 + 34) / 3,080 = 0.077$ . As shown in item 4 of Table 1, the burden hours for completing the survey are 0.33 for each respondent.

**Table 2: Annualized Cost**

Task	Respondents		Time Estimate		Hourly rate	Estimated monetary cost of burden
	Type of respondent	Number	Hours per respondent	Total hours		
<b>Gaining cooperation</b>	District administrators and principals	1,540	.08	122	\$50	\$6,100
	School board members and teachers	1,540	.08	122	\$30	\$3,660
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,080</b>	<b>.08</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>\$9,760</b>
<b>Survey</b>	District administrators and principals	1,120	.33	370	\$50	\$18,500
	School board members and teachers	1,120	.33	370	\$30	\$11,100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,240</b>	<b>.33</b>	<b>740</b>	<b>\$40</b>	<b>\$29,600</b>
<b>Total</b>						<b>\$39,360</b>

**13. Estimate of Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents or Record-Keepers**

There are no start-up costs for this collection.

**14. Estimates of Annualized Cost to the Federal Government**

Annualized costs to the federal government for developing, fielding, and analyzing the survey include \$153,151 in Y1 (for developing the survey, obtaining OMB approval, and project management), \$208,182 in Y2 (for fielding the survey, analyzing results, and project management), and \$155,422 in Y3 (for analyzing results, drafting reports, and project

management). Thus the average annual cost to the federal government for work conducted over all three years is \$172,252.

**15. Reasons for Program Changes or Adjustments**

This is a new study.

**16. Plan for Tabulation and Publication and Schedule for Project**

**a. Tabulation Plans**

Responses to each closed-ended item in the survey will be compiled and reported separately for school board members, superintendents, principals, and teachers across all seven states in order to identify differences in the demand for and use of REL services that are based on educator role. Data from common survey items will be analyzed by demographic characteristic as well, looking for significant differences in the responses of particular educators based on, e.g. whether they are located in urban vs. rural schools or districts. Survey responses also will be aggregated to the state level by educator role and demographic characteristic to determine how the demand for and use of REL services varies geographically within the Midwest region.

Responses to the open-ended survey item will be reviewed to develop a topical coding scheme that captures the range of educator needs that go beyond those covered in the survey itself. Once coded, these items will also be analyzed by educator role, demographic characteristic, and state.

**b. Publication Plans**

The report is scheduled to be completed in April 2014, following the completion of data collection in Q2 and Q3 of 2013. A key objective of the report is to identify high priority needs and how these vary across educator roles and geographic regions (both among and within states).

Analytic techniques will range from descriptive statistics and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to qualitative analysis of open-ended items in the survey.

**c. Time Schedule**

The timeline for data collection, analysis, and reporting is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Schedule of Activities**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
Field online survey	April 2013-July 2013
Analysis and report	August 2013-April 2014

**17. Approval Not to Display the Expiration Date for OMB Approval**

Approval not to display the expiration date for OMB approval is not requested.

**18. Exception to the Certification Statement**

No exceptions to the certification statement are being sought.