

comments will become a matter of public record. Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and (e) estimates of capital or start-up costs and costs of operation, maintenance, and purchase of services to provide information.

Approved: April 15, 2003.

Glenn P. Kirkland,

IRS Reports Clearance Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Internal Revenue Service

Low Income Taxpayer Clinic Grant Program; Availability of 2004 Grant Application Package

AGENCY: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: This document contains a Notice that the IRS has made available the grant application package (Publication 3319) for parties interested in applying for a Low Income Taxpayer Clinic Grant for the 2004 grant cycle. The IRS will award a total of up to \$6,000,000 or the amount appropriated by Congress to qualifying organizations. **DATES:** Grant applications for the 2004 grant cycle must be received by the IRS (not postmarked) by July 1, 2003. Applications may be transmitted by mail or electronically.

ADDRESSES: Send completed grant applications to: Internal Revenue Service, Taxpayer Advocate Service, LITC Program Office Mail Stop 211-D, 401 W. Peachtree St. NW., Atlanta, GA 30308. To transmit an application electronically, go to www.irs.gov/advocate. Copies of the grant application package (IRS Publication 3319) can be downloaded from the IRS Internet site at: www.irs.gov/advocate or ordered by calling 1-800-829-3676.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The LITC Program Office at 404-338-7185 (not a toll-free number) or by email at LITCProgramOffice@irs.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Section 7526 of the Internal Revenue Code authorizes the IRS, subject to the availability of appropriated funds, to award organizations matching grants of up to \$100,000 for the development, expansion, or continuation of qualified low income taxpayer clinics. Section 7526 authorizes the IRS to provide grants to qualified organizations that represent low income taxpayers in controversies with the IRS and/or inform individuals for whom English is a second language of their tax rights and responsibilities. The IRS may award grants to qualifying organizations to fund one-year, two-year or three-year project periods.

The 2004 LITC Application Package and Guidelines, Publication 3319, includes several changes that are being planned to improve IRS's understanding of and involvement with the technical components of the LITC Program. Among the changes, IRS is planning to work with clinics to establish issue committees, develop more comprehensive program standards, improve communications, and increase the emphasis on education and outreach programs to taxpayers for whom English is a second language. In addition, the package provides an explanation of "ancillary" as it relates to tax return preparation.

The costs of preparing and submitting an application are the responsibility of each applicant. Each application will be given due consideration and the LITC Program Office will mail notification letters to each applicant.

Selection Criteria

Applications that pass the eligibility screening process will be numerically ranked in each of the areas listed below based on the information contained in their proposed program plan. Each criterion reflects the maximum number of points that may be assigned. In assigning numerical points, the IRS will evaluate the program plan based on how it will assist in accomplishment of the IRS mission and goals and meeting the LITC statutory requirements as stated elsewhere in the application package. Organizations can receive a maximum of 100 points. If you are applying for more than one qualifying activity (*i.e.*, representation, referral, ESL, or combination thereof) each type of program will be evaluated separately. The ranking points will be assigned as follows:

A. Quality of programs offered to assist low income taxpayers or individuals for whom English is a

second language, including (Maximum 75 points)—

1. Qualifications of administrators and qualified representatives;
2. qualifications and tax expertise of qualified representatives;
3. comprehensiveness of services to be provided;
4. the amount of time devoted to the program by clinic staff;
5. training clinic participants will be provided;
6. plans for supervising clinic participants;
7. procedures for ensuring the confidentiality of taxpayer information;
8. publicity of clinic operations; and
9. the dates and days and hours of clinic operation.

B. Experience in sponsoring a tax clinic where individuals with tax controversies with the IRS were represented; or

Experience in sponsoring a tax clinic where individuals with tax controversies with the IRS were referred; or

Experience in providing a program to inform individuals for whom English is a second language about their rights and responsibilities. (Maximum 10 points)

C. Quality of grant administration and internal accounting procedures. (Maximum 10 points)

D. Number of low income and ESL taxpayers in geographical area. (Maximum 5 points)

Other Considerations

Please note that the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program is a separate and distinct program from the LITC grant program. Organizations currently participating in the VITA Program may be eligible to apply for a LITC grant if they meet the criteria and qualifications outlined in the LITC Grant Application Package & Guidelines (Publication 3319). Organizations that seek to operate both VITA and LITC programs must maintain separate and distinct programs to ensure proper cost allocation for LITC grant funds and adherence to both VITA and LITC program rules and regulations. In addition to the foregoing criteria, to foster parity regarding clinic availability and accessibility for taxpayers nationwide, the IRS will consider the geographic area of applicants as part of the decision making process. The IRS will also seek to attain a proper balance of academic and non-profit organizations as well as a proper balance of start-up and existing clinics.

Comments

Interested parties are encouraged to provide comments on the IRS's

administration of the grant program on an ongoing basis.

Nina E. Olson,

National Taxpayer Advocate, Internal Revenue Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Internal Revenue Service

Open Meeting of the Area 4 Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (Including the States of Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, West Virginia, and Wisconsin)

AGENCY: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: An open meeting of the Area 4 Taxpayer Advocacy Panel will be conducted (via teleconference).

DATES: The meeting will be held Wednesday, May 7, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary Ann Delzer at 1-888-912-1227, or (414) 297-1604.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice is hereby given pursuant to section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. (1988) that an open meeting of the Area 4 Taxpayer Advocacy Panel will be held Wednesday, May 7, 2003, from 11 a.m. central time to Noon Central daylight time via a telephone conference call. The Taxpayer Advocacy Panel is soliciting public comment, ideas, and suggestions on improving customer service at the Internal Revenue Service. You can submit written comments to the panel by faxing to (414) 297-1623, or by mail to Taxpayer Advocacy Panel, Stop 1006MIL, 310 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53203-2221. Public comments will also be welcome during the meeting. Please contact Mary Ann Delzer at 1-888-912-1227 or (414) 297-1604 for dial-in information.

The agenda will include the following: Various IRS issues.

Note: Last minute changes to the agenda are possible and could prevent effective advance notice.

Dated: April 15, 2003.

Deryle Temple,

Director, Taxpayer Advocacy Panel.

[FR Doc. 03-9778 Filed 4-18-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Internal Revenue Service

Open Meeting of the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel Earned Income Tax Credit Issue Committee

AGENCY: Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Treasury.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: An open meeting of the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel Earned Income Tax Credit Issue Committee will be conducted in Atlanta, Georgia.

DATES: The meeting will be held Wednesday, May 7 and Thursday, May 8, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marisa Knispel at 1-888-912-1227, or 718-488-3557.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Notice is hereby given pursuant to section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App. (1988) that an open meeting of the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel Earned Income Tax Credit Issue Committee will be held Wednesday, May 7 and Thursday, May 8, 2003 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. EST in Atlanta, GA. The public is invited to make oral comments. Individual comments will be limited to 5 minutes. For more information or to confirm attendance, notification of intent to attend the meeting must be made with Marisa Knispel. Mrs. Knispel may be reached at 1-888-912-1227 or 718-488-3557, or write Marisa Knispel, TAP Office, 10 Metrotech Center, 625 Fulton Street, Brooklyn, NY 11021, or post comments to the Web site: <http://www.improveirs.org>.

The agenda will include the following: Various IRS issues.

Note: Last minute changes to the agenda are possible and could prevent effective advance notice.

Dated: April 15, 2003.

Deryle Temple,

Director, Taxpayer Advocacy Panel.

[FR Doc. 03-9779 Filed 4-18-03; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

[OMB Control No. 2900-0018]

Agency Information Collection Activities Under OMB Review

AGENCY: Office of General Counsel, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995 (44 U.S.C., 3501 *et seq.*), this notice announces that the Office of General Counsel (OGC), Department of Veterans Affairs, has submitted the collection of information abstracted below to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and comment. The PRA submission describes the nature of the information collection and its expected cost and burden; it includes the actual data collection instrument.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before May 21, 2003.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR A COPY OF THE SUBMISSION CONTACT:

Denise McLamb, Information Management Service (045A4), Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420, (202) 273-8030 or FAX (202) 273-5981 or e-mail: denise.mclamb@mail.va.gov. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0018."

Send comments and recommendations concerning any aspect of the information collection to VA's OMB Desk Officer, OMB Human Resources and Housing Branch, New Executive Office Building, Room 10235, Washington, DC 20503 (202) 395-7316. Please refer to "OMB Control No. 2900-0018" in any correspondence.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Titles:

a. Application for Accreditation as Service Organization Representative, VA Form 21.

b. Appointment of individuals as Claimant's Representative, VA Form 22a.

OMB Control Number: 2900-0018.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Abstract: VA Form 21 is used to obtain basic information necessary to determine whether an individual may be accredited as a service organization representative for the purposes of representation of claimants before the VA. The information is used to evaluate qualifications, ensure against conflicts of interest, and allow appropriate organization officials to certify the character and qualifications applicants. It is designed to ensure that regulatory standards for accreditation have been met so that claimants for VA benefits have available a pool of qualified claims representatives to assist them in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of their claims.

VA Form 22a is used by a claimant for VA benefits to confer power of attorney upon an attorney, agent, or individual service organization representative in order that the attorney, agent, or individual representative may represent