NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY

[CFDA NO. 84-257F]

Application for Technology Grant Awards to Governor's State Literacy Resource Centers To Build a National Electronic Information and Communication Network for Literacy by Establishing Regional Hubs on the Internet in Each of the Four Regions Designated by the Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education

Note to Applicants: This notice is a complete application package. Together with the statute authorizing the program and applicable regulations governing the program, including the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), this notice contains all the information, application forms, regulations, and instructions needed to apply for a grant under this competition.

AGENCY: The National Institute for Literacy.

ACTION: Notice.

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Information about the Institute's funding opportunities, including the application notices can be viewed on the LINCS WWW server (under Current Events, under grants). LINCS URL: http://novel.nifl.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Definitions: For purposes of this announcement the following definitions

apply:

"Literacy" An individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one's goals and develop one's knowledge and potential (as stated in the National Literacy Act of 1991).

"State Literacy Resources Centers (SLRCs)" State or regional organizations supported through any combination of federal, state, or private funds that has the purpose of coordinating the delivery and improvement of literacy services acress agencies and organizations in the state or region, enhancing the capability of state and local organizations to provide literacy services, building a database of literacy related information, and working closely with the National Institute for Literacy and other national literacy organizations to enhance the national literacy infrastruture.

"Literacy Community" individuals and groups at all levels nationwide that

are actively involved with adult literacy and basic skills instruction, including individuals such as researchers, practitioners, policymakers, adult learners, and administrators, and groups such as state and local departments of education, human services, and labor; libraries; community-based organizations; businesses and labor unions; and volunteer and civic groups.

"OVAE regions" the four regions of the United States designated by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE):

Area I: Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virgin Islands

Area II: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia

Area III: Ilinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin

Area IV: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, Federal States of Micronesia, Guam, Marshall Island, No. Mariana Islands

"Regional Hub" an Internet-based electronic information retrieval and communication site, operating through an SLRC, that acts as the focal point for LINCS activity, including training and technical assistance, for a particular OVAE region.

Background: The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), as authorized by the National Literacy Act of 1991, has the legislative mandate to develop a national literacy data base. The intent of this mandate was to consolidate scattered and inaccessible information resources for literacy.

As a first step toward carrying out this charge, and in keeping with the Administration's "information superhighway" initiative, NIFL conducted a study in 1992 of the literacy community's information needs by type of users, quality and format of existing literacy sources and data bases. Following up on the results of this survey in 1993, NIFL formed eight work groups of representatives from the literacy community to develop a vision and work plan for establishing its information and communications system, which is now called LINCS (the Literacy Information aNd

Communication System). The work groups used a consensus-building process to produce a framework, standards, and guidelines for LINCS, which are presented in NIFL's "Starting Point" manual.

In order to implement the work groups' vision and plans, NIFL developed the LINCS on-line prototype to examine and demonstrate the potential and capabilities of an Internetbased national literacy information and

communication network.

The LINCS prototype has been developed as a World Wide Web system on the Internet, accessible by Mosaic and Lynx. It is designed to access literacy data available in multiple locations, and features searchable literacy holdings (including SLRC holdings) and other literacy resources. It also provides access to the databases of ERIC, OTAN (Outreach and Technical Assistance Network), TTRC (Training Technology Resource Center) NCAL (National Center on Adult Literacy), the National Adult Literacy and Learning Disability Center, and the Library of Congress. In addition, the prototype includes E-mail, an event calendar, funding announcements, and information on legislation.

NIFL's plan for the next two years is to establish the LINCS prototype as the foundation for a national electronic literacy network by upgrading the technological capabilities of the field. Major components of the plan are:

(1) To broaden the literacy community's access to literacy resources.

(2) To develop politics and procedures for information sharing throughout the literacy community.

(3) To enhance awareness throughout the literacy community about the potential of a state-of-the-art information and communications technology for the field of adult education,

(4) To ensure that LINCS keeps pace with the state-of-the-art technology and becomes increasingly more capable of enriching literacy services through the provision of comprehensive information resources to the literacy community.

Overview of the technology project: In order to build an infrastructure that can support electronic communications and information exchange for literacy, NIFL proposes to support SLRCs in establishing regional information and communication hubs for literacy. These hubs will create a base for expansion of LINCS into a national network. Using state-of-the art technology, the regional hubs will facilitate access to information and resource sharing within and among the regional literacy communities and