



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

**Agency Information Collection Activities: Comment Request;
Generic Survey Clearance for the Directorate of Education
and Human Resources (EHR)**

AGENCY: National Science Foundation

ACTION: Notice

SUMMARY: The National Science Foundation (NSF) is announcing plans to request renewed clearance of this collection. In accordance with the requirement of section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, we are providing opportunity for public comment on this action. After obtaining and considering public comment, NSF will prepare the submission requesting Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance of this collection for no longer than 3 years.

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed 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 proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and (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.

Dates: Written comments should be received by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] to be assured of consideration. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

ADDRESSES: Written comments regarding the information collection and requests for copies of the proposed information collection request should be addressed to Suzanne Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Blvd., Rm. 295, Arlington, VA 22030, or by e-mail to splimpto@nsf.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Suzanne Plimpton on (703) 292-7556 or send e-mail to splimpto@nsf.gov. Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may

call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., Eastern time, Monday through Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title of Collection: EHR Generic Clearance.

OMB Approval Number: 3145-0136.

Expiration Date of Approval: July 31, 2012.

Abstract: The National Science Foundation (NSF) requests renewal of program accountability and communication data collections (e.g., surveys, face-to-face and telephone interviews, observations, and focus groups) that describe and track the impact of NSF funding that focuses on the Nation's science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education and STEM workforce. NSF funds grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements to colleges, universities, and other eligible institutions, and provides graduate research fellowships to individuals in all parts of the United States and internationally.

The Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR), a unit within NSF, promotes rigor and vitality

within the Nation's STEM education enterprise to further the development of the 21st century's STEM workforce and public scientific literacy. EHR does this through diverse projects and programs that support research, extension, outreach, and hands-on activities that service STEM learning and research at all institutional (e.g., pre-school through postdoctoral) levels in formal and informal settings; and individuals of all ages (birth and beyond). EHR also focuses on broadening participation in STEM learning and careers among United States citizens, permanent residents, and nationals, particularly those individuals traditionally underemployed in the STEM research workforce, including but not limited to women, persons with disabilities, and racial and ethnic minorities.

At the request of OMB an EHR Generic Clearance was established in 1995 to integrate management, monitoring, and evaluation information pertaining to the NSF's Education and Training (ET) portfolio in response to the Government Performance and Results Acts (GPRA) of 1993. Under this generic survey clearance (OMB 3145-0136), data from the NSF administrative databases are incorporated with findings gathered through initiative-, divisional-, and

program-specific data collections. The scope of the EHR Generic Clearance primarily covers descriptive information gathered from education and training projects that are funded by NSF. Most programs subject to EHR Generic data collection are funded by the EHR Directorate, but some are funded in whole or in part by disciplinary directorates or multi-disciplinary or cross-cutting programs. Since 2001 in accordance with OMB's Terms of Clearance (TOC), NSF primarily uses the data from the EHR Generic Clearance for program planning, management, and audit purposes to respond to queries from the Congress, the public, NSF's external merit reviewers who serve as advisors, including Committees of Visitors (COVs), and the NSF's Office of the Inspector General.

OMB has limited the collection to three categories of descriptive data: (1) Staff and project participants (data that are also necessary to determine individual-level treatment and control groups for future third-party study); (2) project implementation characteristics (also necessary for future use to identify well-matched comparison groups); and (3) project outputs (necessary to measure baseline for pre- and post- NSF-funding-level impacts).

Use of the Information: This information is required for effective administration, communication, program and project monitoring and evaluation, and for measuring attainment of NSF's program, project, and strategic goals, and as identified by the President's Accountability in Government Initiative; GPRA, and the NSF's Strategic Plan. The Foundation's FY 2006-2011 Strategic Plan describes four strategic outcome goals of Discovery, Learning, Research Infrastructure, and Stewardship. NSF's complete strategic plan may be found at:

http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?ods_key=nsf0648.

Since the EHR Generic Clearance research is primarily used for accountability purposes, including responding from queries from COVs and other scientific experts, a census rather than sampling design typically is necessary. At the individual project level funding can be adjusted based on individual project's responses to some of the surveys. Some data collected under the EHR Clearance serve as baseline data for separate research and evaluation studies.

In order to conduct program- or portfolio-level evaluations, however, both experimental and quasi-

experimental evaluation research studies on STEM education interventions require researchers to identify individual-level and organization- or project-level control and treatment groups or comparison groups. NSF-funded contract or grantee researchers and evaluators in part may identify control, comparison, or treatment groups for NSF's ET portfolio using some of the descriptive data gathered through OMB 3145-0136 to conduct well-designed, rigorous research and portfolio evaluation studies.

In accordance with the 2001, 2005, 2008, and 2011 OMB Terms of Clearances, NSF requests separate stand-alone clearance (and separately announces for comment in the **Federal Register**) any program or portfolio research or evaluation.

Respondents: Individuals or households, not-for-profit institutions, business or other for profit, and Federal, State, local or tribal government.

Number of Respondents: 8,494.

Burden of the Public: The total estimate for this collection is 65,868 annual burden hours. This figure is based on the previous 3 years of collecting information

under this clearance and anticipated collections. The average annual reporting burden is between 1.5 and 72 hours per "respondent," depending on whether a respondent is a direct participant who is self-reporting or representing a project and reporting on behalf of many project participants.

Dated: March 9, 2012.

Suzanne H. Plimpton,

Reports Clearance Officer,

National Science Foundation.

[FR Doc. 2012-6185 Filed 03/13/2012 at 8:45 am; Publication
Date: 03/14/2012]