



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Notice of Request for a Revision to and Extension of Approval of an Information Collection; Qualitative Feedback on Agency Service Delivery

AGENCY: National Science Foundation

ACTION: Revision to and extension of approval of an information collection; comment request.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the National Science Foundation's intention to request a revision to and an extension of approval of an information collection associated with qualitative customer and stakeholder feedback on service delivery by the National Science Foundation.

DATES: Written comments on this notice must be received by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS FROM PUBLICATION] to be assured of consideration. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

ADDRESS: 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. 1265, Arlington, VA 22230, or by e-mail to splimpto@nsf.gov.

COMMENTS: Written 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; or (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Suzanne H. Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1265, Arlington, Virginia 22230; telephone (703) 292-7556; or send email 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, which is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year (including federal holidays).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Generic Clearance for the Collection of Qualitative Feedback on Agency Service Delivery.

OMB Number: 3145-0215.

Type of Request: Revision to and extension of approval of an information collection.

Abstract: The proposed information collection activity provides a means for the National Science Foundation (NSF) to garner qualitative customer and stakeholder feedback in an efficient, timely manner, in accordance with the Agency's commitment to improving service delivery.

By qualitative feedback we mean information that provides useful insights on perceptions and opinions, but not statistical surveys that yield quantitative results that can be generalized to the population of study. This feedback will provide insights into customer or stakeholder perceptions, experiences, and expectations; provide an early warning of issues with service; or focus attention on areas where communication, training, or changes in operations might improve delivery of products or services.

This collection will allow for ongoing, collaborative and actionable communications between the Agency and its customers and stakeholders. It will also allow feedback to contribute directly to the improvement of program management.

The solicitation of feedback will target areas such as: Timeliness, appropriateness, accuracy of information, courtesy, efficiency of service delivery, and resolution of issues with service delivery. Responses will be assessed to plan and inform efforts to improve or maintain the quality of service offered to the public. If this information is not collected, vital feedback from customers and stakeholders on the Agency's services will be unavailable.

NSF will only submit a collection for approval under this generic clearance if it meets the following conditions:

- o The collection is voluntary;
- o The collection is low-burden for respondents (based on considerations of total burden hours, total number of respondents, or burden-hours per respondent) and is low-cost for both the respondents and the Federal Government;

- o The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other Federal agencies;
- o The collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the near future;
- o Personally identifiable information (PII) is collected only to the extent necessary and is not retained;
- o Information gathered is intended to be used only internally for general service improvement and program management purposes and is not intended for release outside of NSF (if released, NSF must indicate the qualitative nature of the information);
- o Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions; and
- o Information gathered will yield qualitative information; the collection will not be designed or expected to yield statistically reliable results or used as though the results are generalizable to the population of study.

Feedback collected under this generic clearance provides useful information, but it does not yield data that can be generalized to the overall population. This type of generic clearance for qualitative information will not be used for quantitative information collections that are designed to yield reliably actionable results, such as monitoring trends over time or documenting program performance. Such data uses require more rigorous designs that address: The target population to which generalizations will be made, the sampling frame, the sample design (including stratification and clustering), the precision requirements or power calculations that justify the proposed sample size, the expected response rate, methods for assessing potential nonresponse bias, the protocols for data collection, and any testing procedures that were or will be undertaken prior to fielding this study. Depending on the degree of influence the results are likely to have, such collections may still be eligible for submission for other generic mechanisms that are designed to yield quantitative results.

As a general matter, this information collection will not result in any new system of records containing privacy information and will not ask questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious

beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

Below we provide the National Science Foundation's projected average estimates for the next three years:

Affected Public: Individuals and Households, Businesses and Organizations, State, Local or Tribal Government.

Average Expected Annual Number of activities: 15.

Respondents: 500 per activity.

Annual responses: 7,500.

Frequency of Response: Once per request

Average minutes per response: 30.

Burden hours: 3,750.

Dated: December 12, 2013

Suzanne H. Plimpton,
Reports Clearance Officer,
National Science Foundation.

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