



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Notice of Intent to Seek Approval to Establish an Information Collection

AGENCY: National Science Foundation

ACTION: Notice and Request for Comments

SUMMARY: The National Science Foundation (NSF) is announcing plans to request clearance of this collection. In accordance with the requirement of Section 3506(c)(2)(A) of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13), we are providing opportunity for public comment on this action. After obtaining and considering public comment, NSF will prepare the submission requesting that OMB approve clearance of this collection for no longer than three years.

DATES: Written comments on this notice must 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.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS: Contact Suzanne H. Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 295, 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). You also may obtain a copy of the data collection instrument and instructions from Ms. Plimpton.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

TITLE of COLLECTION: Awardee Reporting Requirements for the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) Research Infrastructure Improvement Programs

OMB Number: 3145-NEW

Expiration Date of Approval: Not applicable

Type of Request: Intent to seek approval to establish an information collection.

Abstract:

Proposed Project:

The mission of the National Science Foundation (NSF) is to promote the progress of science; to advance the national health, welfare, and prosperity; and to secure the national defense, while avoiding the undue concentration of research and education. In 1977, in response to congressional concern that NSF funding was overly concentrated geographically, a National Science Board task force analyzed the geographic distribution of NSF funds, which resulted in the creation of an NSF Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). Congress specified two objectives for the EPSCoR program in the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 1988: (1) to assist States that historically have received relatively little Federal research and development funding; and (2) to assist States that have demonstrated a commitment to develop their research bases and improve science and engineering research and education programs at their universities and colleges

The EPSCoR Research Infrastructure Improvement Programs advance science and engineering capabilities in EPSCoR jurisdictions for discovery, innovation and overall knowledge-based prosperity. These projects build

human, cyber, and physical infrastructure in EPSCoR jurisdictions, stimulating sustainable improvements in their Research & Development (R&D) capacity and competitiveness.

EPSCoR projects are unique in their scope and complexity; in their integration of individual researchers, institutions, and organizations; and in their role in developing the diverse, well-prepared, STEM-enabled workforce necessary to sustain research competitiveness and catalyze economic development. In addition, these projects are generally inter- (or multi-)disciplinary and involve effective jurisdictional and regional collaborations among academic, government and private sector stakeholders that advance scientific research, promote innovation and provide multiple societal benefits; and they broaden participation in science and engineering by engaging multiple institutions and organizations at all levels of research and education, and people within and among (EPSCoR jurisdictions. These projects usually involve between 100 (Track-2) to 300 (Track-1) participants per year over the performance period and provide outreach experiences to thousands of K-12 students and teachers. America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2010, Section 517 (H. R. 5116,

Section 517) requires NSF EPSCoR to submit annual reports to both Congress and OSTP that contains data detailing project progress and success (new investigators, broadening participation, dissemination of results, new workshops, outreach activities, proposals submitted and awarded, mentoring activities among faculty members, collaborations, researcher participating on the review process, etc.).

EPSCoR RII Track-1 and Track-2 projects are required to submit annual reports on progress and plans, which are used as a basis for performance review and determining the level of continued funding. To support this review and the management of an EPSCoR RII projects, teams are required to develop a set of performance indicators for building sustainable infrastructure and capacity in terms of a strategic plan for the project; measure performance and revise strategies as appropriate; report on the progress relative to the project's goals and milestones; and describe changes in strategies, if any, for submission annually to NSF. These indicators are both quantitative and descriptive and may include, for example, the characteristics of project personnel and students; aggregate demographics of participants; sources of financial support and in-kind support; expenditures by

operational component; characteristics of industrial and/or other sector participation; research activities; workforce development activities; external engagement activities; patents and patent licenses; publications; degrees granted to students involved in project activities; and descriptions of significant advances and other outcomes of the EPSCoR project's efforts. Part of this reporting takes the form of several spreadsheets to capture specific information to demonstrate progress towards achieving the goals of the program. Such reporting requirements are included in the cooperative agreement which is binding between the awardee institution and NSF.

Each project's annual report addresses the following categories of activities: (1) research, (2) education, (3) workforce development, (4) partnerships and collaborations, (5) communication and dissemination, (6) sustainability, (7) diversity, (8) management, and (9) evaluation and assessment.

For each of the categories the report is required to describe overall objectives for the year; specific accomplishments, impacts, outputs and outcomes; problems or challenges the project has encountered in making progress

towards goals; and anticipated problems in performance during the following year.

Use of the Information: NSF will use the information to continue funding of the EPSCoR RII projects, and to evaluate the progress of the program.

The current RPPR is designed primarily to support reporting from individual investigators and not for large centers/center-like programs involving hundreds of participants. The change would facilitate reporting better aligned with program goals and is expected to minimize reporting burden on the EPSCoR community and provide data as legislatively required for NSF EPSCoR.

Estimate of Burden: 100 hours per project for twenty-nine projects for a total of 2,900 hours.

Respondents: Non-profit institutions; federal government.

Estimated Number of Responses per Report: One

COMMENTS: 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 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.

Dated: February 2, 2016

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

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