

SUPPORTING STATEMENT – Part A

SUPPLEMENTAL QUALIFICATIONS STATEMENT

OMB No. 0535-0209

A. JUSTIFICATION

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

Interagency Agreement Number DOA-1 between the Department of Agriculture and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) provides authority to examine, rate, and certify applicants for agricultural statistician positions, series GS-1530, and mathematical statistician (agricultural) positions, series GS-1529, within the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). The delegation of authority was made under provisions of U.S. Code Title 5, Section 1104, as amended by P.L. No. 104-52(1995). [Attachment A](#) is a copy of the Interagency Agreement. Specifically, see section I. E. 2. d. on page 4 and o. on page 6.

Resumes, curriculum vitae, and the "Optional Application for Federal Employment" (OF-612), are general purpose forms used to evaluate applicants for positions in the Federal service. While these forms request specific information about an applicant, they do not always obtain detailed references to those knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's) that are critical to the job. The Supplemental Qualifications Statement (SQS) for agricultural statistician and mathematical statistician (agricultural) positions allows applicants the opportunity to describe their achievements or accomplishments as they relate to the required KSA's.

- 2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.**

OPM policy states that applicants should be provided the maximum amount of information about the job requirements and rating procedures without compromising the integrity of the examination process. Applicants should also be told what abilities are being measured and what kinds of information are used to evaluate those abilities. The requirement is satisfied through the use of the SQS which is Section III of the enclosed continuous NASS Employment Announcement (see [attachment B](#)). Personnel specialists use the information on the SQS to evaluate and rate the applicant's accomplishments or achievements for positions of agricultural statistician, grades GS-5/7/9 and mathematical statistician (agricultural), grade GS-9. This information is also used by the selecting official as one of the criteria in the selection process.

The KSA's required to do the work are developed and documented in accordance with Section 14C and 15C of OPM's "Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures." These guidelines describe standards for maximizing the current validity of unassembled examinations. Applicants applying for agricultural statistician or mathematical statistician (agricultural) positions are evaluated based on their accomplishments or achievements.

- 3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

This Supplemental Qualifications Statement is available for downloading from the Internet as a part of the government job bulletin board, at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov>, under Job Announcement Number: WA-AG-2-01. The form will eventually be converted to include web-based filing under the e-Government Act of 2002.

- 4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.**

Information requested on the SQS is different from that of the resume or OF612. The SQS allows the applicant to describe accomplishments and achievements in terms of the required KSA's. This allows the rating official to better assess the quality of specific skills relevant to the position to be filled.

- 5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-I), describe any methods used to minimize burden.**

There are no small businesses involved in this information collection.

- 6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.**

Information is collected only once from each applicant unless the applicant wishes to update his or her accomplishments or achievements. Applicants applying for agricultural statistician or mathematical statistician (agricultural) positions in NASS are required to complete the SQS and, in some cases, other OPM forms in conjunction with their application.

- 7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the general information guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.**

There are no special circumstances associated with this information collection.

- 8. Provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments.**

The Federal Register Notice soliciting comments was published on December 1, 2006, on pages 69534-69535. No public comments were received.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and record-keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

The SQS was assembled in conjunction with OPM.

- 9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents.**

There are no payments or gifts to respondents.

- 10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

There is a confidentiality statement contained on the SQS. Although the primary use of the SQS is to determine the applicant's qualifications for Federal employment, the applicant is aware that the information may be used for other reasons as stated on the form.

- 11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature.**

There are no questions of a sensitive nature.

- 12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. The statement should indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens in Item 13 of OMB Form 83-I. Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.**

About 50 applications are received by NASS each year, and about 30 applicants are hired for either an agricultural statistician or mathematical statistician (agricultural) position. A large number of the qualified applicants are college students with advanced degrees. Based on the number of questions that applicants are asked to make statements on regarding their accomplishments or achievements, it is estimated that those applying for

positions can complete the SQS in about 3 hours for a burden of 150 hours (3 x 50 = 150).

Cost to the public (applicants) for completing the SQS is based on the Fiscal Year 2007 General Schedule hourly rate for the Locality Pay Area of Washington-Baltimore, DC-MD-VA-WV for GS-7, Step 1 since most positions are filled as agricultural statisticians at this level. With 150 hours of burden (for 50 applicants), multiplied by \$18.04 per hour, the total cost to the public is \$2,706. Positions of statistician at the GS-11 level and above are rated by panels of three subject matter experts paid at a salary of grade GS-11 level and above. Because hiring at the GS-11 level and above happens so infrequently, these estimated costs are not included in this report.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection of information.

There is no cost burden to respondents for this information collection.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government; provide a description of the method used to estimate cost which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses, and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The SQS's for applicants applying for the agricultural statistician position at GS-5/7/9 or the mathematical statistician (agricultural) position at GS-9 are initially reviewed by a personnel specialist at the GS-9 level and then rated by a personnel specialist at the GS-11 level. It takes approximately ½ hour to review and ½ hour to rate each application. Based on the hourly rate of the personnel specialists, it costs \$12.50 (½ of the GS-9, Step 5 hourly rate) to review and \$15.13 (½ of the GS-11, Step 5 hourly rate) to rate each SQS, excluding other administrative processes, or \$1,382 annually, (\$12.50 + \$15.13) x 50 applicants. This represents no additional cost to the Government.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I (reasons for changes in burden).

No change in annual burden for the Supplemental Qualifications Statement is expected.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

These forms will be used only for the employment process. Vacancy announcements are issued twice a year to hire non-status candidates and usually remain open for 1 year. When changes may impact the burden to the applicant, such changes are made public and will become effective 30 days thereafter. The candidates affected are sent written notification of the change. After the examining process takes place, applicants are

notified of their eligibility status within 10 working days.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

Approval is requested for non-display of the expiration date. Though fewer than 100 application forms are used each year, printing is done in bulk to save on printing costs. In order for our agency's supply of these forms not become obsolete before they can be used, we would like to omit the exact expiration date.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19, "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions" of OMB Form 83-I.

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.

January 2007

Attachments:

A - Interagency Agreement

B - Employment Announcement