SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)
Allocation of Resources for Fire Service and Emergency Medical Service
OMB CONTROL NO. 0693-XXXX

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

This information collection will be a part of the "Multi-phase Study on Firefighter Safety and the Deployment of Resources" project funded by the Department of Homeland Security's Fire Prevention and Safety grants program. This information collection is required in order to generate a statistically representative analysis of the fire service response data.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.

The information collection will be used to identify resource allocation strategies which most effectively mitigate community fire and health risks. The data will be collected in a format suitable for advanced regression analysis. The information collection will be used during the course of the grant exclusively by NIST employees and other grantee principal investigators, including the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE), the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF), the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), and Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI). This project will provide fire and emergency medical response authorities with quantitative and validated tools to assess policy and resource changes in the context of community economics and life safety. This information collection and dissemination will comply with the NIST CIO Information Quality Guidelines and Standards.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.

All respondents will utilize a password-protected, web-based data entry program to assist with data entry. This will enhance the speed and quality of the data collection. Interval data will be entered numerically (with appropriate error checking), while ordinal data will have choices from drop-down boxes. The web address http://www.fddata.org has been reserved for this project, which is an abbreviation for fire department data collection.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

There does not exist presently any collection of community hazards and fire service mitigation strategies which is generalizeable to the majority of communities across the United States. The National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) does collect a subset of data related to this study, but lacks the breadth of variables as well as the community representativeness which will be addressed with this information collection.

5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize burden.

Not Applicable.

6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

The consequence of not conducting this information collection would be significant to the emergency response community. There is no validated, quantitative basis for allocating community resources at the municipal level. Thus, judgment and trial-and-error are currently utilized to determine response strategies. A validated quantitative resource allocation model will enable communities to make efficient, well informed decisions which provide adequate assurance of public safety levels and efficient expenditure of public resources. Without such a model, optimal safety levels may not be achieved or inefficient resource allocation will result in public services being cut elsewhere.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

Not Applicable.

8. Provide a copy of the PRA Federal Register notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the 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 recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

A Federal Register Notice soliciting public comment was published on October 16, 2006. No comments were received.

9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

Respondent fire departments will be provided with a complimentary copy of the finished model.

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

Not Applicable.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

Not Applicable.

12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.

For the approximately 128 responding departments, we estimate of need of 4,167 hours. This is based upon an estimate of the amount of time required to document a singular incident (five minutes) and the number of incidents required (approximately 50,000) in order to ensure statistical power (0.80) and significance (0.05).

(50,000 responses x 5 min. per response = 4167 hours)

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in #12 above).

Total annual cost burden is anticipated to be $0.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.

The one-time cost to the government to collect this information collection is approximately $100,000.00. This cost is based upon estimates of labor hours related to database design, testing, maintenance, and archiving. This cost is based upon an estimate of two persons working 500 labor hours each for database design, testing, maintenance, and archiving, plus approximately $25,000 in supplies and travel expenses.

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

This is a new collection thus no changes or adjustments.

16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.

The results of this information collection will be reported in summary form. Each data element will be discussed with ordinary statistics, including mean, median, standard deviation, skew, treatment of outliers, sample weights to address under-represented samples, etc. The data will be analyzed using advanced regression modeling techniques to generate understanding of which resources effectively mitigate community hazards and risks. In addition, the regression coefficients and variable transformations will be published. Finally, the findings, assumptions, and limitations will be published in professional, archival literature. The information collection will commence in summer 2007 and continue for approximately one year. The final report will be issued in 2009.

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

Not Applicable.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19 of the OMB 83-I.

Not Applicable.