

**REQUEST FOR GENERIC CLEARANCE OF SURVEY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS
FROM THE DIVISION OF SCIENCE RESOURCES STATISTICS (SRS)**

The Division of Science Resources Statistics (SRS) of the National Science Foundation (NSF) requests a three-year extension of the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB's) generic clearance that will allow SRS to continue to rigorously develop, test, and evaluate its survey instruments and methodologies. NSF has a mandate to "provide a central clearinghouse for the collection, interpretation, and analysis of data on scientific and engineering resources and to provide a source of information for policy formulation by other agencies of the Federal Government." This request is part of an on-going initiative to improve SRS surveys as recommended by both its own guidelines, as well as those of OMB.¹

In the last decade, state-of-the art techniques have been increasingly instituted by NSF and other federal agencies, and are now routinely used to improve the quality and timeliness of survey data and analyses, while simultaneously reducing respondents' cognitive workload and burden. The purpose of this generic clearance is to allow SRS to continue to adopt and use these state-of-the-art techniques to improve its current data collections on science, engineering and technology inputs and outputs. They will be used to improve the content of existing surveys as well as aid in the development of new data collections to capture changes in the U.S. science and engineering enterprise and to fill gaps in coverage of the science and engineering (S&E) enterprise in the existing SRS portfolio.

Following standard OMB requirements SRS will apply to OMB individually for each survey improvement project it undertakes under this generic clearance. SRS will request OMB approval in advance and provide OMB with a copy of the questionnaire (if one is used), and materials describing the project.

SRS envisions using the following kinds of survey improvement techniques, as appropriate to the individual projects under investigation: focus groups, cognitive and usability laboratory and field techniques, exploratory interviews, behavior coding, respondent debriefing, and split panel tests. SRS has used virtually all of these techniques in previous activities conducted under generic clearance.

¹ NSF Information Quality Guidelines are available on <http://www.nsf.gov/policies/infoqual.jsp>. OMB Information Quality Guidelines are available on <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/inforeg/infopoltech.html>. OMB standards and guidelines for statistical surveys are available on http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/inforeg/statpolicy/standards_stat_surveys.pdf.

- a. Focus Group Methodology is a qualitative method that brings together a small number of relatively homogenous subjects to discuss pre-identified topics. A protocol containing questions or topics focused on a particular issue or issues is used to guide these sessions, and is administered by a trained monitor. Focus groups are useful for exploring and bringing to the surface issues with either respondents or stakeholders. Focus groups are a good choice during the development of a survey or survey topic, when a pre-existing questionnaire or survey questions on the topic do not yet exist. SRS has used focus groups for several projects under generic clearance to assist with redesign of surveys when it became evident that the content of a survey was out-dated and did not reflect current issues or the context that respondents were facing.

- b. Cognitive and Usability Laboratory and Field Techniques is another qualitative method that refers to a set of tools employed to study and identify errors that are introduced during the survey process. These techniques are generally conducted one-on-one with respondents. Cognitive techniques are generally used to elucidate the question-response process, whereas usability is generally used to understand the physical features of a survey, for instance, its display and navigational features. In concurrent interviews, respondents are asked to think aloud as they actually answer the survey. In retrospective interviews, respondents answer the survey as they would normally, then ‘think aloud’ afterwards. Other techniques, which are described in the literature and which will be employed as appropriate include: follow-up probing, memory cue tasks, paraphrasing, confidence rating, response latency measurements, free and dimensional sort classification tasks, and vignette classifications. The objective of all of these techniques is to aid in the development of surveys that work with respondents’ thought processes, thus reducing response error and burden. These techniques are generally very useful for studying and revising a pre-existing questionnaire. SRS has used cognitive and usability testing in previous generic clearance projects both to improve existing survey items and to assist in the development of items for new content on existing surveys.

- c. Exploratory Interviews may be conducted with individuals to understand a topical area. These may be used in the very early stages of developing a new survey. It may cover discussions related to administrative records, subject matter, definitions, etc. Exploratory interviews may also be used in exploring whether there are sufficient issues related to an existing data collection to consider a redesign. SRS has used such interviews extensively in recordkeeping studies with respondents to several of its institutional surveys to determine both what types of records institutions keep (and

therefore what types of information they can supply) as well as where and in what format such records are kept by the institution.

- d. Behavior Coding is a quantitative technique in which a standard set of codes is systematically applied to respondent/interviewer interactions in interviewer-administered surveys or respondent/questionnaire interactions in self-administered surveys. The advantage of this technique is that it can quantifiably identify problems with the wording of questions, but the disadvantage is that it does not necessarily illuminate the underlying causes.
- e. Respondent Debriefing is a quantitative technique in which the actual survey under investigation is augmented by a second set of questions. The purpose of these questions is to determine if the original survey questions are understood as intended, to learn about respondents' form filling behavior and recordkeeping systems, or to elicit respondents' satisfaction with the survey. This information can then be used (especially if it is triangulated with other information) to aid in improving the survey. This technique has also been employed in previous generic clearance projects both to identify potential problems with existing surveys (or particular survey items) as well as to explore how respondents react to new items.
- f. Split Panel Tests refer to controlled experimental testing of alternative hypotheses. Thus, they allow one to choose from among competing questions, questionnaires, definitions, error messages, surveys, or survey or survey improvement methodologies with greater confidence than any of the other methods. While split panel tests conducted during the actual fielding of the survey are superior in that they support both internal validity (controlled comparisons of variable under investigation) and external validity (represent the population under study), split panel tests as part of pretesting activities are useful as well. Nearly any of the previously mentioned survey improvement methods can be strengthened when teamed with this method.

The generic clearance package for each survey improvement project will describe the specific techniques to be used and will indicate how these techniques are appropriate for the proposed project.

SECTION A. JUSTIFICATION

A 1. Legal Authority and Circumstances Requiring the Collection of Information

The NSF Division of Science Resources Statistics (SRS) is responsible for collecting, analyzing, evaluating and disseminating information on science, engineering and technology employment, work force, and education, as well as research and development (R&D) funding and performance. In accordance with Sec. 3(a)(6) of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended, the National Science Foundation (NSF) is directed to “provide a central clearinghouse for the collection, interpretation, and analysis of data on scientific and engineering resources and to provide a source of information for policy formulation by other agencies of the Federal Government.” SRS publishes data in individual reports and in such general reports as *Science and Engineering Indicators* and *Women, Minorities and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering*.

An extension to SRS’ previously granted generic clearance is requested for several reasons. As a federal statistical agency, SRS is engaged in a process of continuous improvement in the data collections it conducts. Critical to the improvement in existing surveys is the ability to engage in small scale projects to test alternatives to current approaches being utilized in the surveys. Generic clearance authority substantially enhances SRS’ ability to engage in such testing and exploration. Furthermore, the world continues to change and SRS needs to continuously evaluate its surveys in light of these changes. Respondent behavior changes (e.g., response rates decrease over time), as do technology (e.g., web surveys quickly became a data collection option), and the S&E enterprise (e.g., it used to be that students were associated with one discipline, however, today students increasingly pursue interdisciplinary studies). Similarly, the understanding of how to improve surveys continues to evolve (e.g., the application of cognitive psychology to survey methodology has increased our understanding of surveys).

In addition, SRS has work in progress under the existing generic clearance (3145-0174) that has not been completed. Below are listed the tasks under the current clearance that need renewal.

Project

SRS Generic Clearance; Survey of Graduate Students
and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering
SRS Request for Cognitive Testing
SRS Generic Clearance; Survey of Earned Doctorates
Survey of Earned Doctorates salary question
SRS Generic Clearance; SESTAT Surveys

SRS Generic Clearance; Industrial R&D Survey
SRS Generic Clearance; Postdocs Project

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Thus, SRS needs an OMB generic clearance structure to continue its quest to improve the overall quality of its statistical surveys, reduce the burden on respondents to SRS surveys, and shorten the time required for SRS to update and improve its data collections.

A 2. Purposes and Use of the Information

The information obtained from these efforts will be used to develop new NSF surveys and improve current ones. Specifically, the information will be used to reduce respondent burden and to improve the quality of the data collected in these surveys. These objectives are met when respondents are presented with plain, coherent and unambiguous questionnaires that ask for data, which is compatible with respondents' memory and/or current reporting and recordkeeping practices. The purpose of the survey improvement projects will be to ensure that SRS surveys are continuously attempting to meet these standards of excellence.

Improved NSF surveys will help policy makers in decisions on research and development funding, graduate education, scientific and technical workforce, innovation, as well as contributing to increased agency efficiency and reduced survey costs. In addition, methodological findings have broader implications for survey research and may be presented in technical papers at conferences or published in the proceedings of conferences or in journals.

A 3. Use of Information Technology to Reduce Burden

SRS will employ information technology, as appropriate, to reduce the burden of respondents who agree to participate in its survey improvement projects. Many respondents of current SRS surveys supply email addresses, which can be employed during the recruitment of respondents to the survey improvement projects. This will allow respondents to communicate with SRS at their convenience. Many of the respondents to current SRS surveys of academic institutions can provide addresses for web sites with additional information (e.g., about their schools), once again reducing their workload. SRS will also explore the use of state-of-the-art technology and other appropriate uses of technology, as of yet unknown, to reduce burden on respondents to both individual and institutional surveys.

Web surveys have the potential to facilitate respondents' data entry by performing automated tabulations and by providing feedback regarding errors in the reported data. These features potentially reduce the need for follow-up contact with respondents. However, the success of these features resides in their being well designed. Thus, one focus of SRS improvement activities will be the user-friendliness of its web-

based surveys to ensure that respondents are presented with the most understandable and least burdensome instruments possible. In addition, SRS will explore the adoption of other innovative methods as appropriate to reduce respondent burden.

A 4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

Survey improvement projects will be undertaken to improve existing or inform the development of new SRS data collections. The targeted data collections themselves are subject to great scrutiny to ensure there is no duplication of other efforts. Therefore, the projects conducted under the generic clearance authority will not duplicate other efforts. They will be directed toward ensuring that changes in existing surveys or components of new collections are tested and validated prior to full-scale implementation.

A 5. Provisions for Reducing Burden on Small Organizations

One goal of SRS' efforts to improve its surveys is to reduce the burden that small organizations experience when they respond to SRS surveys. The more that can be learned about the organizational and recordkeeping practices of all entities, including how small entities differ from larger ones, the better position SRS will be in to design surveys (and procedures) that work with the systems of various types of respondents, including small entities, to reduce their burden.

A 6. Consequences of Not Collecting the Information

There would be numerous consequences to SRS' not being able to conduct the survey improvement projects requested in this document. The quality of the data collected in current surveys would decrease: questionnaires and questions that presently are obsolete and poorly designed would remain that way, and over time, those that are now well-designed may become obsolete. New items and procedures would be implemented without adequate testing and refinement. Advances in understanding of how organizations/individuals answer surveys and how SRS can better serve respondents would be curtailed. And SRS' ability to develop timely new well-designed surveys would be diminished.

A7. Special Circumstances for Collection

Under this clearance, SRS will explain any circumstances that would result in respondents being required to:

- Report information to the agency more often than quarterly;

- Prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it;
- Submit more than an original and two copies of any document;
- Retain records, other than health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years;
- Respond in a statistical survey in a manner that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results, i.e., results that can be generalized to the universe of study;
- Use a statistical data classification that differs from those approved by OMB;
- Respond in a manner that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use;
- Submit proprietary trade secret or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

A8. Federal Register Notice and Consultation Outside the Agency

Comments on this data collection effort were solicited in the Federal Register, Vol. 71, No.#168, on Wednesday, August 30, 2006 (see Attachment A). No substantive comments were received in response to the information provided.

One of the primary objectives behind many of the survey improvement techniques is to involve respondents in the developmental process of a new survey, to solicit their reactions to current surveys, to observe their form filling behaviors, and/or to ask them about their recordkeeping systems. Thus, the underlying purpose of these objectives is essentially to consult with respondents in order to ultimately ease their task, reduce their burden, and improve the quality/accuracy of their responses.

A 9. Remuneration to Respondents

SRS, or its contractors, sometimes does provide compensation to participants in survey improvements projects. The compensation may be for travel costs only. In other cases compensation is offered to participants. The compensation is no more than \$75 for focus groups and no more than \$40 for cognitive interviews. The clearance package for any generic clearance project that will offer to compensate to participants will discuss the rationale for and the amount of such compensation. The clearance package will provide specific justification if amounts proposed are higher than those specified above.

A 10. Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents

Respondents in the survey improvement projects will be advised that their participation is voluntary. In many projects SRS may propose to audio tape (and/or videotape) activity (e.g., focus groups or interviews) for several reasons: (1) to provide staff involved in the research project, including those not present at the activity, a complete and accurate record should questions later arise or memories fail; (2) to allow staff to focus completely on what is taking place without being distracted by the need to take notes; (3) to provide others working on similar projects access to the information; and (4) to allow the information to be used to train others to conduct this type of research or for illustrative purposes in presentations to professional audiences. In such cases, respondents will be informed of the audio or videotaping and assurances of confidentiality will not be provided to respondents. Instead, respondents will have the option of requesting that all data that they provide be kept confidential. Nonetheless, SRS will work to maintain the confidentiality of the information, so that no information about an individual organization or an individual’s personal data is released.

A 11. Questions of a Sensitive Nature

No questions of a sensitive nature are anticipated in work conducted under this generic clearance.

A 12. Estimate of Response Burden

SRS estimates that a total reporting burden of 8,200 hours over the three years of the requested generic clearance will result from working to evaluate/improve existing surveys and to develop new ones. Table 1 provides a list of potential surveys for which generic clearance activities might be conducted, along with estimates of the number of respondents and burden hours that might be involved in each. The number of respondents includes only those respondents participating in special projects that are outside the normal data collection activities. The clearance projects do, however, include pretesting of survey changes, which may take place in multiple modes. In most cases, small numbers of respondents will be included in requests for clearance. The burden estimates include totals for the entire three years of the generic clearance, and projects for the same survey may take place in multiple years of the clearance. The hours are based on similar SRS projects over the past few years...

Table 1. Potential surveys for improvement projects, with the number of respondents and burden hours		
	Number of	Number of burden hours

Name of project (OMB Clearance Numbers that apply)	Respondents		Annual	Total
	Annual	Total		
Graduate Student Survey (3145-0062)	167	500	250	750
SESTAT Surveys (3145-0020, 3145-0077, 3145-0141)	333	1,000	333	1,000
Postdoc Data Project	267	800	400	1,200
New and Redesigned R&D Surveys Academic R&D (3145-0100)	200	600	400	1,200
Nonprofit R&D	83	250	50	150
Industry R&D (0607-0912)	167	500	667	2,000
Survey of Scientific & Engineering Facilities (3145-0101)	100	300	50	150
Survey of Earned Doctorates (3145-0019)	100	300	167	500
Additional surveys/activities not specified	483	1,450	417	1,250
Total	1,900	5,700	2,734	8,200

Specific details for surveys listed in Table 1 are provided below.

Industrial R&D Survey (OMB No. 0607-0912)

The Survey of Industrial Research and Development is cosponsored by the U.S. Census Bureau. OMB clearance is obtained by Census, the collection and tabulation agent for the survey. The survey is a nationally representative sample of all for-profit companies, publicly or privately held. The population for the survey is restricted to companies with five or more employees that performed R&D within the 50 United States and the District of Columbia. The survey collects information on total receipts, total employment, employment of scientists and engineers, and expenditures for R&D by type of expense, type of performer, state location, and other aspects of industrial R&D performance.

Periodicity: Annual

Sample: Approximately 32,000 companies in FY 2007.

Expected Generic Clearance Activities: NSF is currently working with the Census Bureau on an extensive redesign effort. The redesigned survey is expected to be fielded for the FY 2008 survey cycle.

A variety of activities have already been conducted including site visits to companies to determine how records are kept and workshops with experts and data users. A variety of future activities are possibilities under the generic clearance authority including focus groups with respondents, site visits to companies to explore data availability for new items, usability testing of the web survey, and small pilot tests conducted to determine the feasibility of new question wordings.

Academic R&D Survey (OMB No. 3145-0100)

The Academic R&D Expenditures Survey is a census of universities and colleges that grant degrees in the sciences or engineering and expend at least \$150 thousand in S&E R&D in the survey period. The survey collects information on separately budgeted R&D expenditures reported by universities and colleges. This includes all funds expended for S&E activities specifically organized to produce research outcomes and commissioned by an agency either external to the institution or separately budgeted by an organizational unit within the institution.

Periodicity: Annual

Sample: 670 universities and colleges in FY 2005.

Expected Generic Clearance Activities: NSF is planning an extensive redesign effort, with redesign components planned to be implemented in the survey for the Fall 2010 survey cycle. A variety of activities are possibilities under the generic clearance authority including site visits to institutions to determine how records are kept, respondent debriefing interviews (by phone, email, or in-person), workshops with respondents, usability testing of the web survey, and small pilot tests conducted to determine the feasibility of new question wordings and new data collection.

Facilities Survey (OMB No. 3145-0101)

The Survey of Science and Engineering Research Facilities Survey is a survey sent to all institutions meeting the following criteria: (1) research-performing colleges and universities in the United States that expended at least \$1 million in research and development funds in the prior fiscal year and (2) nonprofit, biomedical research organizations and hospitals in the U.S. that received at least \$1 million in NIH research funding in the prior fiscal year. The survey collects information on the status of research facilities including data on the amount and type of science and engineering research space; current and planned expenditures for projects to construct and repair/renovate research facilities; and source of funds for construction and repair/renovation of research facilities. In addition, the survey collects data on information technology such as networking bandwidth and high performance computing.

Periodicity: Biennial

Sample: 477 academic institutions and 191 biomedical institutions in FY 2005.

Expected Generic Clearance Activities: NSF is continuing efforts to fine tune survey items and procedures. A variety of activities are possible under the generic clearance authority including site visits to institutions to determine how records are kept, respondent debriefing interviews (by phone, email, or in-person), small scale usability testing of the web survey, and small pilot tests conducted to determine the feasibility of new question wordings or new data collection procedures.

Nonprofit Survey

NSF is exploring an update to the Survey of R&D Funding and Performance by Nonprofit Organizations, 1996 and 1997. This survey collected information from independent nonprofit organizations and had a response rate of only 40 percent. If the survey is conducted again, background work will be needed to plan a quality survey that can achieve a higher response rate. Some of the background work is currently investigating alternative sources for this information to eliminate the need for a survey.

Periodicity: As needed to update national R&D statistics

Sample: 9,000 out of a population of 185,000 organizations were screened with a questionnaire in 1996; 795 organizations were selected for inclusion in the full survey on the basis of the screener results.

Expected Generic Clearance Activities: In exploring the feasibility of conducting this survey again, a variety of activities are being considered including site visits to institutions to determine data availability, focus groups or workshops with potential respondents, data users, or experts; and small pilot tests conducted to determine the feasibility of question wordings or data collection procedures.

GSS Survey (OMB No. 3145-0062)

The GSS survey gathers information on graduate students, postdoctorates, and non-faculty research in science, engineering, and health (SEH) fields at the department level from all U.S. higher education institutions which award a master's or doctorate degree in one or more SEH fields. It collects information from institutional respondents on counts and demographic characteristics of graduate students and postdoctorates, financial support for graduate students and postdoctorates, and counts of non-faculty researchers with Ph.D.s.

Periodicity: Annual.

Sample: 12,320 departments in 587 institutions for the fall 2005 collection.

Expected Generic Clearance Activities: NSF is currently engaged in an extensive redesign effort for the GSS survey, with redesign components planned to be implemented in the survey in the Fall 2007 and Fall 2008 survey cycles. To develop the redesigned format and content of the GSS survey, a variety of activities are anticipated under the generic clearance authority. One type of activity would be site visits to institutions to determine how records are kept and who might be the most appropriate respondents within institutions to provide the types of information the GSS collects. Other activities could be focus groups with potential or actual respondents to explore specific topics related to the GSS. There will also be usability testing of the web survey instruments. In addition, there will be activities directed toward evaluating the effectiveness of the two-phased implementation of redesigned survey components, such as respondent debriefings.

SESTAT Surveys (OMB No. 3145-0020, 0077, and 0141)

The SESTAT surveys are three related-surveys: the Survey of Doctorate Recipients (SDR), the National Survey of Recent College Graduates (NSRCG), and the National Survey of College Graduates (NSCG). These surveys collect demographic, employment and education information on scientists and engineers in the U.S. population. Scientists and engineers are defined as those with a degree at the baccalaureate level or above who have a degree in an SEH field or are working in an SEH occupation. The data from the three surveys are combined into an integrated data base on scientists and engineers, the Scientists and Engineers Statistical Data System (SESTAT). The SDR and NSCG are longitudinal surveys, and the NSRCG provides the frame for new SEH graduates to be added to the NSCG.

Periodicity: Every two-three years, and the next survey administrations are planned for 2008 and 2010.

Sample: The sample size for the three surveys combined was approximately 100,000 in the 2006 survey cycle.

Expected Generic Clearance Activities: Activities under the generic clearance authority in the next three years would be directed at developing new items and improving existing items for both the 2008 and 2010 survey cycles of the three surveys. These activities are likely to include focus groups for the development of new items, cognitive interviewing for both new and old items, and usability testing for paper and web instruments. In addition, the sampling frame for the NSCG survey will be changing for the 2010 survey cycle and additional testing of revised procedures may be necessary in connection with that change.

Survey of Earned Doctorates (OMB No. 3145-0019)

The Survey of Earned Doctorates (SED) is a universe survey of all recipients of a research doctorate from a U.S. university in an academic year (defined as July 1 of one year to June 30 of the following year), which has been conducted as an interagency effort since 1957. The SED collects information about the

education of new doctorate recipients, their future employment plans, and their demographic characteristics. The SED also provides the sample frame for new doctorate recipients for the SDR, the longitudinal survey of science, engineering, and health doctorates.

Periodicity: Annual

Sample: Depends on the number of research doctorates awarded in a given year. For the academic year ending June 30, 2005, it was 43,354.

Expected generic clearance activities: Activities under the generic clearance authority in the next three years would be directed at developing new items and improving existing items for the SED. SRS is about to institute a Human Resources Expert Panel to advise on the SRS human resource surveys, and it is likely that the panel will make recommendations related to the SED. A new question about starting salary will be instituted in the 2008 SED, which was developed through several activities under the existing generic clearance. Similar efforts involving focus groups, cognitive interviewing, and small scale testing are anticipated in the next three years.

Postdoc Data Project

The Postdoc Data Project (PDP) is a multi-year effort by SRS to develop strategies for collecting better and more comprehensive data on those in postdoctorate positions. Current SRS surveys only capture well those with U.S. S&E degrees in postdoctorate positions in academic institutions. A major gap is information about those in postdoc positions who earned a doctorate from a foreign institution (which existing information suggests may be over 50% of postdocs in academic institutions) and those who have a degree other than a Ph.D., such as M.D.s in biomedical postdocs. The current focus of the PDP is investigating alternative sources of sample frames for the postdoc populations currently not covered by SRS surveys to see if adequate and appropriate frames can be identified. The goal is to develop data collection instruments on postdocs. The end result may be additions to current SRS surveys or a stand-alone instrument or a combination of both approaches.

Periodicity and sample size: No current survey.

Expected generic clearance activities: A variety of PDP activities have been conducted under the current generic clearance including focus groups, site visits, and methodological pilot testing. Over the next three years, the types of activities that might be undertaken include many of the same types of activities. Focus groups may be used to explore how institutions define and keep information about postdocs and what kinds of information they can provide from their institutional records. Site visits may be used to talk to individuals in a variety of positions within an institution to determine who within institutions are likely to

be the most appropriate people to provide information about postdocs and to observe institutional records. Once potential sample frames have been identified, small pilot tests may be conducted to determine the adequacy and accuracy of those frames for use for sampling, contacting, and surveying postdocs.

A 13. Estimate of Total Cost to Respondents

The cost to respondents generated by the list of potential projects is estimated to be \$307,500 over the three years of the clearance. No one year's cost would exceed \$307,500. In other words, if all work were done in one year, costs in that one year would be \$307,500 and the costs in each of the other 2 years would be zero. (As in previous requests for generic clearance authority, the total cost was estimated by summing all the hours that might be used on all projects over the three years (8,200) and multiplying that figure by the hourly wage (\$37.50) of the level of employee who typically answers SRS' questionnaires or attends SRS workshops.)

There are no capital or startup costs to the respondents. There are no operation or maintenance costs to the respondents. The costs generated by future data collections will be described in the clearance request for each specific data collection. SRS does not anticipate any capital, startup, operation, or maintenance costs for future surveys.

A 14. Estimates of Annualized Costs to the Federal Government

The 3-year cost to the Federal government generated by the survey improvement projects is estimated to be approximately \$750,000. The main components of these costs are contractor costs and staff time. There are no start-up, equipment, operations or maintenance costs. Bidders on the SRS contracts are required to have all software, licenses, and hardware needed to complete the survey improvement projects. The costs generated by future data collections will be described in the clearance request for each specific data collection

A 15. Changes in Burden

The request for burden hours (8,200) is lower than the current generic clearance, which was 14,950 hours.

A 16. Plans for Publication

Data will be collected to develop new surveys or improve current surveys. Methodological findings from survey improvement projects may be references in the technical notes sections of the reports of survey data, in methodology reports, in technical papers presented at conferences, in the proceedings of conferences, or in journals. Generic clearance activities will not be used to calculate substantive results/estimates that will be released.

A17. OMB Approval Expiration Date

SRS will display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection on survey instruments.

A18. Exceptions to the Certification Statement

No exceptions to the Certification Statement should be required. If so, OMB approval will be requested in advance of conducting the survey.