

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION OFFICE OF EDUCATION EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (EPP) and ERNEST F. HOLLINGS UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

OMB CONTROL NO: 0648-XXXX

A. JUSTIFICATION

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

The administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is authorized by section 4002 of the America COMPETES Act, Pub. Law 110-69, to establish and administer a Graduate Sciences Program and Undergraduate Scholarship Program to enhance understanding of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and atmospheric science and stewardship by the general public and other coastal stakeholders, including underrepresented groups in ocean and atmospheric science and policy careers. In addition, NOAA's Administrator is authorized by section 214 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005, [Pub. Law 108-447](#), to establish and administer the Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program to support undergraduate studies in oceanic and atmospheric science, research, technology, and education that support the purposes of the programs and missions of NOAA.

Student applicant information, including information provided by references, will be collected for the Graduate Sciences Program, the Undergraduate Scholarship Program and the Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship*.

NOAA's Educational Partnership Program (EPP) administers all 3 programs, as well as two additional grant programs – the Environmental Entrepreneurship Program (EEP) and Cooperative Science Centers (CSC). The Educational Partnership Program maintains a student tracker database with student and alumni data from all of their educational programs. NOAA EPP staff enters data for the scholarship programs. EEP & CSC will now be required to update the student tracker database for their students; to date, program staff have provided this information informally in their annual reports and NOAA then updated the database with this information.

In addition, EPP is also including an alumni form in this collection. EPP believes this information is necessary because NOAA desires to know whether the NOAA funded students pursue and complete NOAA-related science degrees, the students are employed by NOAA or a NOAA contractor, or are involved in other programs due to their NOAA-funded education and training.

* This program was last approved under OMB Control No. 1910-5125; the FY 2007 information collection was completed in May 2007 and approval expired at the end of that month. EPP is requesting reinstatement under a new NOAA OMB Control Number as part of this new program request.

2. Explain how, by whom, 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.

Educational Programs and Their Purposes

NOAA recognizes outstanding scholarship and encourages independent graduate level research – particularly by female and minority students – in ocean and atmospheric science and policy careers. EPP is strongly committed to broadening the participation of [Minority Serving Institutions](#) (MSIs) such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities, Alaska Native-Serving Institutions, and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions. NOAA’s EPP/MSI partnership is comprised of four program components:

- The **Undergraduate Scholarship Program** (USP) is designed to increase the number of students attending MSIs who undertake course work and graduate with degrees in specific scientific areas or fields integral to NOAA’s mission and pursue graduate degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) disciplines.
- The **Graduate Sciences Program** (GSP) is designed specifically to recruit and provide graduate level training to qualified women and minority candidates in NOAA-related sciences.
- The **Environmental Entrepreneurship Program**’s (EEP) objective is to increase the number of students proficient in environmental business enterprises. The program facilitates linkages between MSIs, NOAA and the private sector.
- The **Cooperative Science Centers**’ (CSCs) objectives are to educate and graduate students in NOAA-related sciences, to conduct research in support of NOAA’s mission, and to build capacity within the collaborating institutions. Five NOAA EPP Cooperative Science Centers were established at five MSIs in September 2006.

The purpose of the **Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program** is to: 1) increase undergraduate training in specific areas integral to NOAA’s mission; 2) increase environmental literacy; and, 3) recruit and prepare students for public service careers with NOAA. Students are not required to attend MSIs as required in the Undergraduate Scholarship Program.

Undergraduate students majoring in NOAA-related sciences may complete and submit an undergraduate application for the Undergraduate Scholarship Program and/or the Hollings Scholarship Program, and request reference forms be sent to their benefit. Interested graduate students majoring in NOAA-related sciences may complete and submit a Graduate Sciences Program application, also requesting references. The annual scholarship application periods will be as follows: 1) October 1 through January 31 for the Undergraduate Scholarship and Graduate Sciences Program; and 2) October 1, through February 8 for the Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program. EPP administers the scholarship programs and collects, maintains and reports the student data and information.

EPP Student Tracker Database

The EPP Student Tracker Database maintains data for all students receiving funding under the programs previously described:

- Undergraduate Scholarship Program;
- Graduate Sciences Program;
- Environmental Entrepreneurship Program;
- Cooperative Science Centers; and,
- Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program.

The collection of student data is a program requirement that enables EPP to assess compliance with its performance measures, described below. NOAA's EPP staff maintains this database and updates it for the three scholarship programs and thus no public burden is incurred for this portion of the input to the database. Information on CSC and EEP students is entered by CSC and EEP program managers, as part of revised award conditions.

EPP requires that NOAA funded student data be provided three times per year, to align with the trimester system to capture student graduation and/or transfers completions of the program that occur during the academic year. The volume of these updates strongly lends itself to this frequency of reporting; it would be unwieldy for the program managers to have to gather and input the data once a year only. Also, receiving the information at these intervals allows ongoing tracking of performance measures. A student alumni form is used to collect follow-up information about the student. NOAA desires to know whether the NOAA funded students pursue and complete NOAA-related science degrees, the students are employed by NOAA or a NOAA contractor, etc. The data collected on the student alumni form is added to and maintained in the student tracker database by the NOAA EPP staff.

The collected student data is also tabulated to provide the status on progress of all programs' performance measures.

Performance Measures

Graduate Sciences Program

- Number of graduate sciences program students hired in NOAA Line Offices

Undergraduate Scholarship Program

- Number of undergraduate scholarship students who are trained and graduate in NOAA-mission related sciences
- Number of undergraduate scholarship students who pursue graduate work in NOAA-related sciences
- Number of undergraduate scholarship students who are hired by NOAA, NOAA Contractors and other natural resources and science agencies at the Federal, State, local and tribal levels

Ernest Hollings Scholarship Program

- Number of Hollings scholarship students who are trained in NOAA-mission related sciences, research technology, and education;
- Number of Hollings scholarship students who are hired by NOAA and other natural resource and science agencies at the Federal, State, and local levels;
- The number of students from the Hollings Program who teach and become educators in NOAA-mission related sciences; and,
- The number of Hollings students who pursue graduate work in NOAA-related sciences.

EPP Student Tracker Database

The CSC, EEP and the unsolicited grants student data and information is collected three times per year to capture student graduation, transfers completions of the program that occur during the academic year. NOAA EPP collects the student data and information for the following purposes to support EPP performance measures:

- EEP number of students who receive training and experiential learning opportunities in NOAA related environmental business enterprises.
- CSC number of students who are trained in a NOAA-related science curriculum;
- CSC number of students who graduate in NOAA core mission science areas;
- CSC number of students who are hired by NOAA, NOAA Contractors and other natural resource and science agencies at the Federal, state, local and tribal levels.
- Assesses EPP grant recipient performance
- Enable EPP comparisons against national graduate data;
- Enable EPP comparisons against NOAA workforce data;
- Facilitate an EPP targeted recruitment;
- Assess EPP's performance when measured against the science education section of the U.S. Ocean Action Plan mandates;
- Assess EPP support of DOC/NOAA Succession Planning and Management Program; and,
- Assess EPP's performance when measured against the NOAA Environmental Literacy goal, as stated in the NOAA Strategic Plan and NOAA Education Plan.

In addition, for the CSC program, allocation of funding is tracked. Grant recipients are required to direct 30% of the award funds to direct student support. The allowable direct student support includes stipends, scholarships, travel, and training:

- Student stipends - to support the cost of tuition, housing, books, lab fees, etc.;
- Student scholarships - to assist and encourage students in their scientific education;
- Student travel to
 - - NOAA programs, facilities, and laboratories
 - - Scientific conferences and workshops
 - - Education and science forums and seminars; and,
- Student training - to attend training conferences, workshops, and seminars.

To measure the impact of EPP, the data collected are compared to the available data in the national education databases (e.g., National Science Foundation and National Center for Education Statistics) and NOAA workforce management database. Furthermore, the student data collection identifies degree pipeline areas (BS, MS, or PhD) where EPP and its academic partners may target recruitment for its' NOAA-related science educational and training programs. NOAA scholarship programs produce a pool of qualified candidates that may be hired by NOAA and help to sustain a world-class NOAA organization.

As explained in the preceding paragraphs, the information gathered has utility. NOAA will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response #10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Prior to dissemination, the information will be subjected to quality control measures and a pre-dissemination review pursuant to Section 515 of Public Law 106-554.

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.

The collection of information will primarily entail web-based forms with electronic fillable forms (e.g., PDF forms) as a back-up. Applicants and grant recipients will complete the web-based forms that will automatically be transferred to a database. In the event that the web-based method is not functional, the applicants and grant recipients may complete fillable forms that may be sent electronically or mailed.

4. Describe the efforts to identify duplication.

CSC & EEP student data and information are unique to the program component in that they are not collected by any other entity. The NOAA scholarship applications are unique in that the applications require responses to NOAA-mission related questions.

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

If the collection is not conducted the data will not be available to support and measure program performance assessments and NOAA program reports.

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 was published on June 19, 2007. No public comments were received on the proposed information collection.

Prior to the preparing the Federal Register Notice, EPP asked two grant recipients to provide an estimate of hours that would be needed to complete the student tracker database form. One student was asked to estimate how many hours were required to complete the Graduate Sciences program application.

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

Not applicable.

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

There is no statutory authority for confidentiality. However, only promotional information (student names, research projects, and photographs) are made public on the program website and in press releases. All other information is available only to program staff.

The physical electronic files are protected from access outside of NOAA and outside of Office of Education, Educational Partnership Program by a system of firewalls and routers. Whenever feasible, applications are hosted within the internally protected network to limit access to NOAA personnel only.

The student scholarship programs' paper application is destroyed after the evaluation and selection of NOAA student scholars. The student name, street address, telephone number and email address are maintained electronically in a secured location on the NOAA server, as is the student tracker database. Access to the electronic files on the Educational Partnership Program shared drive requires username/password combinations to retrieve the information.

A Privacy Impact Assessment is under review by the Department of Commerce. The primary means of file retrieval is not by a personal identifier, and thus this is not a system of records as defined by the Privacy Act.

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.

The student tracker database form is required three times per year from 25 NOAA EPP grant recipients: 5 Cooperative Science Center grant recipients and approximately 20 active Environmental Entrepreneurship Program grant recipients, including unsolicited grant award recipients since 2003. Therefore, EPP expects 75 student tracker database forms annually. The completion of the student tracker database form by each program manager, containing

information on all students within his/her grant program, is expected to take a maximum of 16 hours to enter data for an average of 250 students (thus, an average of 4-5 minutes per student). In other words, each time a program manager completes the student tracker report, the report includes updated information on approximately 250 students. A report is considered one response (including information on 250 students). There are 25 program managers; thus, with 3 reports per year per program manager, total reports/responses are 75. Each report takes 16 hours; thus, 75 x 16 hours makes a total burden for this information collection, annually, of 1200 hours.

Based on a five-year history of applications, EPP expects to receive 40 applications for the Graduate Sciences Program. Subject to EPP appropriated funds, 5 to 7 scholarships are awarded on an annual basis. Completion of the Graduate Sciences Program application form is estimated to take 10 hours. Based on the 40 applications, EPP calculates 120 reference forms, three references per application. The completion of the Graduate Sciences Program reference form is estimated to take 1 hour.

Based on a two-year history of applications, EPP expects to receive 800 undergraduate scholarship programs (USP and Hollings) application. Subject to the appropriated and earmark funds, approximately 15 and 100 students are selected annually for the USP and Hollings scholarship program, respectively. Completion of the undergraduate scholarship programs application is estimated to take 8 hours. Based on 800 applications, EPP calculates 1600 reference forms, two references per application. Completion of the undergraduate scholarship programs reference form is estimated to take 1 hour.

EPP estimates that it will receive 300 Alumni Update Forms for the student scholarship programs. Completion of the alumni form is estimated to take 1 hour.

The total hours of burden of 10,020 hours is provided in the chart provided on the following page. The \$171,500 figure represents labor dollars required to complete the electronic forms.

NOAA Office of Education, Educational Partnership Program and Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program Burden and Labor Costs

Requirement	# of Respondents	# Responses per Respondent	Total # Responses	Response Time (hours)	Total Burden (hours)	Labor Rater per hour (\$)	Labor Cost to Public Per Burden Hour
Student Tracker Database Form for Cooperative Science Center and Environmental Entrepreneurship Program Components (includes unsolicited grants)	25	3	75	16	1200	\$30	\$36,000
Graduate Sciences Program - Application Form	40	1	40	10	400	\$20	\$8,000
Graduate Sciences Program - Reference Form	120	1	120	1	120	\$40	\$4,800
Undergraduate Scholarship Programs - Application Form	800	1	800	8	6400	\$8	\$51,200
Undergraduate Scholarship Programs - Reference Form	1600	1	1600	1	1600	\$40	\$64,000
Alumni Update Form for Student Scholarship Programs	300	1	300	1	300	\$25	\$7,500
TOTAL REQUESTED	2,885		2,935		10,020		\$171,500

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual recordkeeping/reporting cost burden to the respondents resulting from the collection (excluding the valued of the burden hours in #12 above).

Based on a two-year average of applications, EPP expects to receive 30 mailed undergraduate and graduate scholarship program applications annually. It is estimated that it will cost each applicant \$10.00 for photocopying and mailing of the application packages, with a total cost of \$300. Generally applicants express mail the scholarship application at a cost of \$9.00, but cost may run as high as \$20.00.

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

Total annualized cost is \$10,200. The figure represents salary dollars needed to process the collected data (480 hours @\$15.00 per hour = \$7,200) and \$3,000 printing costs. The 480 hours is based on the following:

- 180 hours to process, verify and validate, the student data from the CSC and EPP;
- 160 hours to process the Hollings student applications and reference forms;
- 80 hours to process the USP student applications and reference forms; and,
- 60 hours to process the GSP student applications and reference forms.

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 program.

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

The EPP and Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program student data – student name, research project and photographs – are posted on NOAA's Educational Partnership Program (EPP) and Ernest Hollings web sites and used in press releases. The number of NOAA EPP supported students by NOAA-related scientific or technological discipline and program component will be provided in Government program reports and used for program evaluation and analysis and for outreach and promotional purposes.

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 the certification statement identified in Item 19 of the OMB 83-I.

Not applicable.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection does not employ statistical methods.