

PART A JUSTIFICATION

Part A of this narrative provides the justification for the proposed data collection. Part B provides detail on the statistical methods for the proposed data collection.

A1 Circumstances that make the Collection of Information Necessary

The Corporation for National and Community Service (the Corporation) is seeking approval for surveys for persons participating in Corporation-sponsored conferences. This is an effort to help the Corporation gauge the quality and effectiveness of trainings provided to conference participants.

Certain types of outcomes can only be assessed by surveying appropriate individuals, nonprofit organizations, and institutions. Therefore, instruments have been developed for a census of surveys. The Corporation intends to conduct such surveys annually and use the information collected, along with other outcome data, to gauge the type of training that grantees and other participants want and need, and the format in which the delivery of the training will be most effective. It is anticipated that the surveys will serve as models that the Corporation's grantees can adopt to assess the performance of their own training.

A2 How and By Whom the Data Will Be Used?

Data will be collected through various training and technical assistance service providers and by the Corporation. Because of the Corporation's distinct goals, its diverse program structure, and the wide range of service activities in which its participants, volunteers and grantees are involved, measuring the performance of Corporation-sponsored training sessions requires collecting a variety of different kinds of information from various audiences. While some performance information is maintained in Corporation administrative records, other necessary information must be gathered through contact with relevant members of the public.

A2.2 Purpose of the Data Collection

The first and primary purpose of the data collection is to provide reliable and valid data about the quality and effectiveness of training. Major portions of the data to be collected will provide a basis for the Corporation to report the outcomes of its training to Corporation leadership. It is of major importance, is to help the Corporation, its grantees and programs to improve training services. A considerable amount of the data to be collected will provide an important basis for assessing those aspects of service delivery that are doing well and those that can be improved and, therefore, provide opportunities for service and program enhancement.

A third purpose of the data collection is to use the data (beginning FY2004) to assess the extent to which progress has been made in the content of conferences from year to year.

A2.3 Who Will Use the Information?

Conference planners will use the data to plan for future conferences. Workshop speakers and other training providers will use the results to inform how they can improve the content, relevance and delivery of their training.

Conference attendees, workshop participants and staff from any organization that helped with the planning of a conference will be surveyed. In addition, basic registration information will be obtained for conference and training participants in order to gather demographic information and conduct analysis by demographic.

A3 Use of Improved Technologies

Workshop surveys will be done by paper on-site. Other surveys will be conducted on-line through survey-delivery software.

A4 Efforts to Identify Duplication

Corporation staff reviewed current program data collection efforts to gage duplication. Although the Corporation collects a limited amount of information from programs about the training and technical assistance they have received, but not the information included on the surveys.

A5 Involvement of Small Entities

Some respondents to the surveys will be sub-grantees and small nonprofit organizations. Therefore, in the development of procedures and instruments to be used in the surveys, special effort was made to minimize the data collection burden on such entities.

First, information will be collected, whenever possible, online. Most of the organizations to be surveyed already provide information on their Corporation grants electronically, and are familiar with responding in this manner. Second, survey procedures designed to minimize burden involve: voluntary participation; notification by the Corporation to organizations; and pre-notification and explanation that a survey is being undertaken. The surveys are brief, averaging approximately 15 minutes. Finally, the survey has been designed to require no reference to records or activity other than the time it takes to answer the questions. Should any respondent choose to consult records, it is anticipated that this would require minimal effort. This data collection, therefore, is not considered to have a significant economic impact on small entities.

A6 Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection

Failure to collect the data outlined in this submission on a regular basis will result in insufficient and incomplete information with which to assess and report priority outcomes of the Corporation's programs. Also, less frequent collection of the information outlined in this submission will result in the Corporation not having the information needed for internal program management and improvement purposes on a timely basis.

A7 Special Circumstances

The proposed data collection activities are consistent with the guidelines set forth in 5 CFR 1320.6 (Controlling paperwork Burden on the Public—General Information Collection Guidelines). There are no special circumstances that require deviation from these guidelines.

A8 Consultations Outside the Agency

Expert training providers have been consulted. In addition Corporation grantees have had an opportunity to review the surveys and survey processes.

A9 Payments to Respondents

No payments are being made to respondents.

A10 Arrangements and Assurances Regarding Confidentiality

Participation in the surveys associated with this submission is voluntary, with no adverse consequences to respondents for non- or partial participation. Respondents will be informed that their responses are considered confidential—i.e., that there will be no names, identifiers, or other obvious means to connect individual respondents to their responses on the data files that will be forwarded to the Corporation at the conclusion of this project, unless required by law. Furthermore, reports prepared with these data will only involve aggregations that do not identify any individual respondents with their responses.

A11 Sensitive Questions

The questions being asked on the surveys associated with this submission are not considered to be sensitive. Sensitive questions are defined as those whose answers, if made public, could cause physical, mental, emotional, economic, or other harm to an individual.

A12 Estimate of Annualized Burden Hours

It is estimated that approximately 5,000 public users will respond to surveys and that each survey will take about 15 minutes. The total burden hours is 5,000 hours if each participant responds to four surveys.

A13 Estimated Recordkeeping and Reporting Cost Burden on Respondents

There are no record keeping or preparatory requirements in this data collection. The cost burden to respondents, therefore, is essentially the time required to respond to the survey questions.

Using the Independent Sector average cost per volunteer hour (\$19.51), the estimated cost burden for all surveys is \$97,550.

A14 Estimated Cost to the Federal Government

The total contracted cost to the Federal government for this effort in FY 2009 is \$40,000 for data processing, data analysis, and report preparation. Other costs are a part of ordinary administrative costs.

A15 Reasons for Changes in Burden

There are no changes requested, as this submission to OMB is a new request for approval.

A16 Tabulation Plans, Statistical Analysis, and Study Schedule

The surveys will not require any sampling, although there will be breakout analysis by select demographics. A series of bivariate analyses will be done to relate data for individual outcome indicators to specific characteristics. This disaggregating into subgroups (such as from what sector the training or conference participant comes) will provide the Corporation considerably more detail, and thus considerably more useful information on which to explore where improvements may be needed

A content analysis of the answers to open-ended questions will be done to identify patterns of responses that suggest particular service problems or provide improvement suggestions and reinforce positive training strategies.

Comparisons will be made of the outcome data to targets selected by AmeriCorps officials prior to tabulation of the data.

A17 Expiration Date Display Exemption

Any reproduction of the data collection instrument, including an online version, will prominently display the OMB approval number and expiration date

A18 Exceptions to Certification

This submission, describing data collection, requests no exceptions to the Certificate for paperwork Reduction Act (5 CFR 1320.9).