U.S. Agency for International Development
Request for New Collection of Data
Within Existing System of Record
Africa Bureau Summer Internship Program
OMB Control Number 0412-0572
Supporting Statement

The U.S Agency for International Development (USAID) proposes a new data collection for its Africa Bureau Summer Internship Application in order to collect information from approximately 250-300 students for its summer internship programs at Agency Missions in Africa and Washington, D.C.

1. Why this new collection is needed:

The Africa Bureau staff will use the collected information to evaluate applicants in order to find those people most appropriate for the needs of individual Missions or Offices in USAID/Washington based on suitability reviews vis-à-vis Mission and Bureau needs.

The Summer Internship Application collects information from approximately 250-300 student applicants for its summer internship programs for USAID Missions in Africa and in Washington, D.C. The Africa Bureau routinely assigns its interns challenging and important tasks that require a strong academic background, advanced foreign language abilities, in-country experience, and a high degree of self-confidence. Because of the challenging nature of their work, its importance, and the expense of hosting interns, the Africa Bureau treats the hiring of its intern applicants in much the same way that USAID handles applications for professional positions.

2. Who will use this information and for what purpose:

A limited number of Africa Bureau staff members, including USAID officers in Missions and USAID/Washington, will use the collected information to select potential applicants, if they plan to host one or more interns in the coming summer.

The application form presented to applicants clarifies that information collected will only be used during the internship selection process. No other use is authorized.

The system will not share Personally Identifiable Information (PII) with other internal or external parties to the Agency, nor will the system populate other systems with its stored PII. Only Africa Bureau staff, the website support staff (the webmaster), and the applicant will have access to the supplied PII. The server administrator works for the Development Experience Clearinghouse, which is an Agency contractor.

The system will provide applicants with the ability to withdraw their application and have their information deleted from the database at any time. During the application

process applicants are informed that the information collection is voluntary. They are not required to provide all data elements requested, although failure to provide data elements will likely undermine the strength of their application. During the application process applicants are provided with the opportunity to review and correct the data elements they submit to the system. Applicants may also withdraw their applications through an e-mail request to the system webmaster.

3. Technical aspects of proposed data collection:

The Summer Internship Application will collect PII directly from the applicant through a web-based form, which is accessible at http://www.dec.org/partners/afrintern.

The PII collected will include name, mailing address, phone number(s) and e-mail address(es).

The system asks applicants to provide their university name, class (junior, senior, or graduate student), academic concentration and interests, foreign language abilities, and a statement of interest and intent, in regards to their career interests and other interests to the internship program. Applicants will provide this data by filling out text boxes.

Additionally, the system asks each applicant to provide two letters of recommendation from professors and/or others who have supervised them. These letters will not be stored within the system database. Once the Agency's Africa Bureau staffers identify a specific candidate who meets their requirements, they will request and receive the letters of recommendation by e-mail or facsimile transmission. As part of the application process, students can instruct their references to email recommendations to a special USAID email account: afr_interns@usaid.gov.

References also have the option to send faxes to members of the Africa Bureau Mission staff who express an interest in reviewing the letters. These references will contact the webmaster or the main Africa Bureau administrative person to do this. References can then forward their recommendations, via fax or email, to mission staff who request the letters.

In terms of normal practice in academia and the workplace in general, letters of recommendation are considered to be highly confidential. The subjects of the letters (the students) are not supposed to review written evaluations by their references. This makes it easier for references to write candid evaluations and enhances the credibility of individual letters. Therefore, for letters of reference, both the confidentiality of the reference (professor, supervisor, etc.) and of the student applicant must be protected. Email letters will be kept in a folder for the afr_interns@usaid.gov email account. These emails and faxed reference letters, as well as application files, will be purged from the Agency's system after each application cycle.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication:

Since the Summer Internship Application collects information from approximately 250-300 student applicants for its summer internship programs for USAID Missions in Africa and in Washington, D.C., information does not already exist within the any of Agency's information systems. As there is no existing information on any of the applicants within the any of Agency's information systems, there are no efforts to identify duplicate data within the Agency.

5. Impact of Collection on small entities:

The collection of information neither impacts small businesses nor small entities. The application collects data solely from individual applicants.

6. Consequences for not collecting these data

A consequence to the program if the collection of information were not conducted would include the Agency's inability to treat its intern applicants in much the same way that USAID handles applications for professional positions. This could be inefficient and costly.

7. Special circumstances that require collection inconsistent with OMB Guidelines

There are no special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB Guidelines.

8. Public Notice in the Federal Register and liaison with interested groups

Notice of this Information Collection was published in the Federal Register on April 3, 2009, Volume 74, Number 63, Page 15240. The Agency received no comments during the public comment period.

Agency members have not consulted with persons outside the Agency in order to obtain their views on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported. Specifically, since the application asks that applicants provide two letters of recommendation from professors and/or others who have supervised them, there is no predicting who will ultimately provide data elements (letters of recommendation) to the application. In addition, these letters will not be stored within the system database. Once USAID Africa Bureau staffers identify a specific candidate who meets their requirements, they will request and receive the letters of recommendation by e-mail or facsimile transmission, which will be processed under the Agency's normal Local Area Network (LAN) support system.

9. Decision to provide payment or gift to respondents.

The system owner will neither provide payment nor gift to any respondent of the application.

10. Privacy assurances

The system will provide applicants the ability to withdraw their application and have their information deleted from the database at any time. During the application process, applicants are informed that the information collection is voluntary. They are not required to provide all data elements requested, although failure to provide data elements will likely undermine the strength of their application. During the application process, applicants are provided with the opportunity to review and correct the data elements that they are submitting to the system. An applicant may also withdraw their application via an e-mail request to the system webmaster.

In addition, the following security controls are in place to secure all PII that it processes and provides the basis for assurance, which is based upon existing agency policy.

The database that stores the information exists on a secure server and is password-protected. Once the data is submitted in final form to the server, the applicant no longer has access (except by communicating with the webmaster). This eliminates the possibility that an applicant may log on and then leave their computer for someone else to access the data. Only a small number of Agency staff will have access to the information. When authorized users access the data, they must login by typing their username and password. Individuals who attempt to access one of the data pages directly will automatically be redirected to the login page. This prevents inadvertent access. The application will log off idle users after 15 minutes.

The system will collect applicant information using a web-based form that connects to a database stored on a server maintained by Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC). The system will employ the Coldfusion MX application/security framework. The website and e-mail will include contact information for the site webmaster, in case the applicant has questions or encounters difficulties during the submission process.

The system will use password-protected web-pages to retrieve and present information to limited USAID Africa Bureau staff members, reviewers and approvers. There will be four different classes of users, each with varying degrees of access rights. The Coldfusion application framework checks the login status and user roles each time a user attempts to access a different page. If they are not allowed access, they are returned to the login page. Passwords are encrypted in a table on the server.

Record searches will be limited to three terms: country of interest, sector of interest, and academic major.

The system will present retrieved records as applicant lists, for records that match the search criteria. Each reviewer can select a candidate by clicking on the applicant names to retrieve the entire application. Records will contain a status field. The Africa Bureau staff member who oversees the internship application process and the webmaster can restrict access to the applicant information. This feature will minimize back-and-forth e-mail correspondence regarding the 250-300 candidate applications, which reduces the exposure to an applicant's PII.

The system provides varying degrees of access levels based upon user's need. Users will be able to retrieve and view records that are relevant to the internship positions they are attempting to fill. The two exceptions to this are: 1. the Africa Bureau staff member who oversees the internship application process and 2. the webmaster, who will have access to all records.

The system can generate aggregate- and record-level printouts that may contain PII. Africa Bureau personnel will treat these printouts as "Sensitive But Unclassified" (SBU) information, per agency standards.

11. Justification for questions of a sensitive nature:

There are no questions of a sensitive nature an applicant will have to answer, other than information that is considered part of a normal application. In this case, collected PII will include name, mailing address, phone number(s) and e-mail address(es).

12. Burden of Collection estimate:

There are approximately 300 applicants who may take advantage of this one-time voluntary submission to this information collection. One hundred percent of the applicants are expected to apply online. Total annual hour burden is expected to be 150 hours, which translates to a one-half hour average completion time expected per applicant. The hourly burden rate on respondents is not expected to vary widely among applicants.

13. Record Keeping costs:

The estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information for this application is $0, as the costs will be absorbed into existing processes. Cost estimates are not expected to vary widely and are part of customary and usual business or private practices.

14. Annualized costs to the Government:

The total annualized cost expected to the Federal government is $0. There are no additional expenses the government should incur while collecting an applicant's information.

15. Reasons for program changes indicated in I83 #13 and #14:

There are no program changes in the reporting and record keeping burden indicated in I83 items #13 and #14.

16. Plans for Publication

There are no plans to publish data used from this data information collection exercise, as this system will collect applicant information using a web-based form that connects to a database server housed on a server maintained by Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC). A limited number of Africa Bureau staff, including Agency officers in Missions and those in USAID/Washington, will use the collected information to select potential applicants, if they plan to host one or more interns in the coming summer.

17. Expiration date for OMB approval to collect these data:

The Agency is not seeking OMB approval to refrain from displaying this date.

18. Explanation of each exemption in Item 19 of OMB form 83I:

The Agency does not request any exemption from Item 19 of OMB form 83I, for this application.

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