What Works Clearinghouse Database Forms Revisions

Supporting Statement
CONTROL NO. 1850-0788

Submitted to:

Office of Management and Budget

Submitted by:

Institute for Education Sciences
U.S. Department of Education

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INTRODUCTION

This submission is a request to continue a currently approved collection under OMB Control Number 1850-0788 for the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) [ED-07-CO-0062]. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) established the WWC to develop, maintain, and make accessible a system of high-quality reviews of studies of the effectiveness of education-related interventions. In support of this effort, the WWC currently collects the following types of information:

- Nominations for review
    - Interventions
    - Studies
    - Topics
- Registry of evaluation researchers

During the course of its operation, the WWC determined that it could decrease the amount of information collected on the nomination forms—and thus decrease respondent burden—without compromising the review process. This supporting statement describes and justifies the proposed form changes and includes as attachments the proposed versions of the nomination forms.

Similarly, the WWC has identified collections that no longer serve the needs of the WWC. This supporting statement does not describe these forms, as the following information collected is no longer necessary.

- WWC user type query
- WWC update subscription

This submission is also a request to supplement the WWC's work by collecting the following information:

- Registry of randomized controlled trials

This supporting statement describes the justification for the WWC data collections, and the sections of the forms are detailed in the attachments. This document, which addresses Office of Management and Budget (OMB) concerns regarding respondent burden and paperwork control, has been prepared according to guidelines for completing the justification statement to accompany OMB Form 83-I.

JUSTIFICATION

1. Necessity of Information Collection

There is an increasing recognition among policymakers that decisions about educational programs, products, and practices should be based on evidence of effectiveness from high-quality scientific research. The No Child Left Behind Act (PL 107-110), for example, includes numerous requirements to use the findings from "scientifically based research" in designing and implementing educational interventions. The implementation of this Act—with its promise to serve the educational needs of *all* children and its emphasis on "doing what works"—creates new opportunities and a strong impetus to identify, select, and implement effective school improvement strategies.

However, meeting the challenge and achieving the promise of No Child Left Behind will prove difficult unless education decision makers, including parents, are provided with the timely information and support they need to make wise choices from among the ever-increasing options. Those who have a stake in improving education urgently want credible and reliable information that enables them to judge the effectiveness and quality of alternative approaches to raising student achievement. Educators, policymakers, and the public cannot be expected to *do* "what works" until they actually *know* "what works." By transforming education into an evidence-based field, the Department is working to fulfill its mission of improving student outcomes and providing the information that decision makers need.

The WWC is a key part of this effort. Established by the Department's Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in 2002, the purpose of the WWC is to offer everyone—from public officials to the public at large—a central, independent, and trusted source of scientific evidence of what works in education. In order to be successful, the WWC involves key constituents in the process of its activities, in the development of its products, and in the identification of areas for improvement.

In support of this effort, the web-based submission forms currently posted on the What Works Clearinghouse website (whatworks.ed.gov) (1) allow the public to nominate evidence-based research studies, interventions, and topics for review by the WWC and (2) collect information about researchers who want to supply the public with information about their evaluation services. Accordingly, the WWC will continue to administer the following:

- ***Nomination Forms*** (for studies, interventions, and topics)
- ***Registry of Evaluation Researchers Form*** for registration
- ***Registry of Evaluation Researchers Letter of Commitment***

Clearance is requested to continue these information collection efforts that support the development, operation, and evolution of the WWC and provide the public with information they request. However, the WWC requests clearance to use a redesigned format for the Nomination Forms. These revised forms allow individuals to nominate a replicable intervention, a research study, or a topic for WWC review.

Additionally, the WWC seeks clearance to collect information from researchers and entities that want to supply the public with information about their randomized controlled trials (RCTs),

which are either (1) funded and in progress or (2) completed, with a final report available. The information from the online form will ensure greater coverage of research being conducted and participation of researchers in the field. Accordingly, the WWC requests OMB clearance to administer the following form:

- ***Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials Form*.** Individuals and organizations that would like to provide information about studies either funded and in progress or completed, with a final report available, may submit study information via a registration form. This information will be included in an online searchable database for users to find RCTs concerning particular interventions.

- ***Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials Letter of Commitment.*** To be listed in the Registry of Evaluation Researchers, registrants must sign a letter acknowledging their commitment to both WWC Evidence Standards and related professional standards and ethical practices.

Clearance is requested to add this information collection to support the development, operation, and evolution of the WWC. The WWC will continue to adhere to the language of the existing privacy statement, which indicates that any individual identification will not be posted on the public website without the user's permission.

2. Purposes and Use of the WWC Data Collection Forms

Below we explain the purpose of each of the existing voluntary information collection forms and the changes for which we are requesting review.

Existing forms collect detailed information that the WWC has determined are not needed to decide whether a study, intervention, or topic should be reviewed. The WWC would like to alter these forms and collect only the information necessary to consider interventions, studies, and topics for review. Even though the existing forms collect detailed information from users, the new forms collect comparable information using a smaller number of items.

Study Submission Form. The purpose of the Study Submission Form is to gather information from members of the public who want to inform the WWC of studies that are relevant to WWC Intervention Reports. The online version of this form enables users to enter and submit information electronically. The WWC uses these submissions to supplement the studies located by staff, and the studies will be considered for inclusion in WWC Intervention Reports.

The WWC would like to alter the existing Study Submission Form and collect only the information necessary for the WWC to consider a study for review. The elements of the new form (attachment Form 01) are

- Name of study

- User email address

- Optional electronic document upload

The new Study Submission Form drops a number of items from collection because their accuracy needs to be independently researched and verified by WWC staff before moving forward with a review of the study. Dropping these items also decreases the burden on respondents. Dropped items include:

- Study details
- Study profile (existing long form only)
- Optional contact information
- Optional electronic information release form
- Optional user type categories

Intervention Nomination Form. The purpose of the Intervention Nomination Form is to collect information from education producers and consumers about specific interventions within topic areas that they would like reviewed. Nominations will be used to inform the WWC of interventions that users would like considered for inclusion in WWC Intervention Reports.

Currently, the long Intervention Nomination Form includes three main elements that provide the WWC with information to assess interventions' relevance to WWC topic areas, as well as two optional elements. The short Intervention Nomination Form is similar to the long form, but it omits the In-Depth Description and Background of Intervention.

The WWC would like to replace both of these forms with a single form that collects only the information that is most necessary for the WWC to consider an intervention to review and to respond to the submitter. The elements of the new form (attachment Form 02) are:

- Name of intervention
- User email address

The new Intervention Nomination Form drops a number of items from collection. These items were dropped because their accuracy needed to be independently researched and verified by WWC staff before moving forward with a review of the intervention. Dropping these items also decreases the burden on respondents. Dropped items include:

- Intervention relevance to current topic areas
- General description of the intervention
- In-depth description and background of the intervention
- Optional contact information
- Optional user type categories

Topic Nomination Form. The purpose of the Topic Nomination Form is to gather in-depth information from education producers and consumers about the topic areas and practice guide topics they would like to suggest for review by the WWC. Information gathered via the Topic

Nomination Form will be used to help prioritize topics and practice guides proposed and recommended to IES in the WWC Annual Plan.

Currently, the Topic Nomination Form includes three main elements that are designed to provide the WWC with information to assess the significance of the topic in improving student educational outcomes, as well as two optional elements.

The WWC would like to alter this form and collect only the information necessary for the WWC to consider a topic for review. The elements of the new form (attachment Form 03) are:

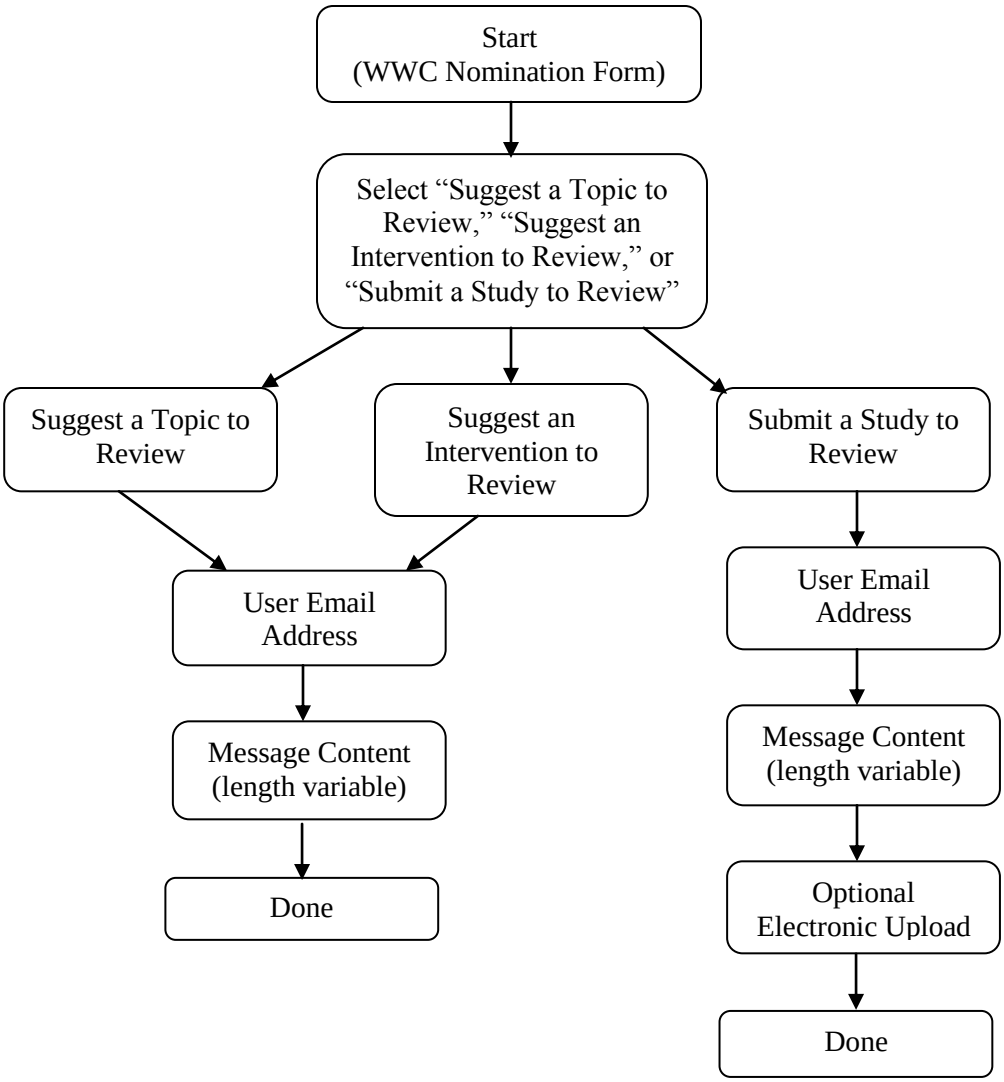
- Description of topic area
- User email address

WWC Submission Process. The WWC Submission Flowchart shown in Exhibit 1 demonstrates the path that website users will be prompted to take during the online submission process.

Responses to the Intervention, Study, and Topic Nomination forms will be captured in a database. Case ID numbers will be used in association with respondents' information. Individual identifying information is accessible only to project staff and will be used only if there are questions about a respondent's submission.

Information will be stored in a secure database on the WWC private website. At the end of the contract, the WWC will provide the U.S. Department of Education with the database that was created during the project.

EXHIBIT 1
WWC Submission Process



Registry of Evaluation Researchers Form and Registry of Evaluation Researchers Letter of Commitment. The online Registry of Evaluation Researchers is designed to provide potential sponsors of effectiveness studies with information about individual and organization evaluators who subscribe to the standards of evidence established by the WWC. The goal of this registry is to contribute to advancing the quality of educational research by (1) assembling a substantial list of committed outcome evaluation providers and (2) supplying tools and guides that help consumers decide what they need, how to assess the qualifications of the evaluators, how to use the information supplied to find potential evaluation providers, and how to supplement the help provided by the registry with other sources of assistance. To be included, evaluators must complete a registration form and sign a commitment letter on the password-protected site (attachment Forms 04 [text documentation] and 05 [letter]). The WWC does not request changes to either of these forms.

Below we explain the purpose of the proposed voluntary information collection form for which the WWC seeks clearance.

Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials. The proposed Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials is designed to provide users with information about RCTs of education interventions, including those completed, with a final report available; those funded and in progress; and those not yet reviewed by the WWC under one of its topic review areas. The goal of this registry is to contribute to advancing the quality of educational research by (1) assembling a substantial list of RCTs in education that are funded and in progress or completed, with a final report available, on particular topics or interventions; and (2) supplying tools and guides that help consumers understand how to use the information supplied in the Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials. To be included, the researchers or entities conducting a RCT must complete the registration form (attachment Form 06) on the password-protected site.

The WWC and the Department do not intend to assess the quality and accuracy of the information supplied by researchers and entities wishing to list studies in the Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials, only its completeness. This will be stated clearly in the searchable online registry. Participation is voluntary. Because the registry will rely on self-reported data, sufficient information is needed so that members of the user community can determine for themselves whether the RCTs – either funded and in progress or completed, with an available final report – meet their needs.

Information planned for this registry is not readily available to the field. We know of no other RCT registries in the field of education that seek to provide information on RCTs either funded and in progress or completed, with an available final report. The valuable role of RCT registries has been well documented by health care researchers, and the Cochrane Collaboration, for example, developed its trials registry, CENTRAL, to improve the quality of access to information on RCTs and to support the production of systematic reviews of RCTs on the effectiveness of interventions. By adapting this conceptual framework, the WWC Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials will provide access to RCTs that are either funded and in progress or completed, with an available final report. Additionally, the WWC Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials will enable the WWC to develop a top-down approach that will track RCTs and look for reports from these trials, a service currently not available. This new service will complement the bottom-up approach of the current WWC, which begins with a complete search of the literature on a given topic, winnows the literature down to identify studies of effectiveness, and sorts studies by intervention.

The proposed Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials is designed for use by researchers and organizations. It consists of elements that will provide end users with crucial information needed to understand the purpose of the study. These elements (attachment Forms 06 [text documentation] and 07 [details]) and are summarized below:

- Contact information
- Organization information
- Study information
- Study details
- Study abstract

Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials Letter of Commitment. For a study to be listed in the Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials, registrants must sign a letter acknowledging their commitment to using the highest standards of scientific evidence, as defined by the WWC, and make clear the degree to which the study will overcome or limit threats to construct, internal, external, and statistical validity. This feature of the registry is intended to strengthen and improve the quality and rigor of such evaluations and research studies. The commitment letter (attachment Form 08) contains the following elements:

- Commitment to the highest standards of scientific evidence, as defined by the WWC.
- Make clear the degree to which the study will overcome or limit the threats to construct, internal, external, and statistical validity and the resulting implications of making appropriate causal claims.

In the commitment letter, evaluators will also provide their signed permission for the WWC to release their information through the searchable registry. The form does not contain any questions of a sensitive or controversial nature.

The registry will remain current in several ways. There will be an initial collection effort to build the registry by identifying RCTs in design or sponsored by the following IES centers: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE); National Center for Education Research (NCER); and National Center for Special Education Research (NCSER).

Additionally, the WWC will develop a list of stakeholders, including developers, evaluators, and policy research organizations, that are likely producers or sponsors of RCTs. The list will be used to guide WWC staff who will periodically survey these stakeholders, as is consistent with the OMB-approved WWC survey form, to identify RCTs that are in design or underway. To encourage updates, the WWC will provide researchers and stakeholder entities in the registry with automatic annual prompts about updates. In addition, incomplete entries will be returned for additional information.

The registration form and the updates will be operated online directly through the website, with the exception of those stakeholders, if any, who do not have Internet capacity or who choose to submit a paper copy for other reasons. Information will be stored in a secure database on the WWC's private website. At the completion of the contract, the contractor will deliver all files, including the Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials, to the Department.

3. Use of Technology in Information Collection

All WWC databases, customer surveys, and registry forms are web-based. Website users may choose to print out the forms from the website and submit a paper copy, but we expect most users to submit the forms electronically via the automated website interfaces. These interfaces have been designed to impose as little collection burden as possible, while still gathering the information needed to inform the WWC. For example, the existing nomination forms request information from users on forms 5 to 12 pages in length. The proposed revised nomination forms are only 1 to 3 pages, and each page requires no more than three items from the user.

To reduce the burden on those using the Registry of Evaluation Researchers and the Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials, returning users may update their forms without having to resubmit their information. Assistance is also provided in using the web-based forms. For example, the registry forms link users to definitions of key terms and documents, where appropriate. In addition, users have easy access to personal and individual guidance if needed, and information on how to contact the WWC is visibly presented on the website.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

The information to be collected from the nomination forms, the Registry of Evaluation Researchers database, the customer survey, and the Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials is not available from any other source and will not duplicate any existing information collection effort.

5. Burden on Small Business Organizations

Not applicable to this information collection.

6. Consequences of Less Frequent Information Collection

The nomination forms are voluntary and sought out by WWC website users; therefore, it is assumed that these forms will be completed only when the user wishes to submit answers for a survey or to nominate an intervention, study, or topic for review.

Those submitting information through the Registry of Evaluation Researchers and the Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials also participate by self-selection, but they are prompted to update their information on an annual basis. This is necessary to keep the contents of the database up to date and useful to the public.

Information about the availability of the nomination forms will be disseminated periodically at presentations to encourage users and potential users to visit the website and submit their requests and feedback. If we did not disseminate information about these opportunities periodically, existing users might forget that this feature of the website is available to them, and potential users might not learn about how to submit their nominations and information needs.

7. Special Circumstances

Users may submit copyrighted publications. These publications will not be shared with the public until the appropriate permissions are obtained. Users may also submit unpublished studies and request that they be kept confidential. These studies also will not be shared with the public until permission is obtained.

8. Outside Consultants

Since the contract award date, WWC staff members have given presentations to a wide range of administrators, researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and others to inform them about the WWC and to allow them to inform us of their information needs. Information provided through these interactions and presentations has guided the redesign of the nomination forms.

No outside consultants have contributed to the design of the registries. No outside consultants will contribute to the maintenance of the registries.

9. Explanation of Providing Payment or Gifts to Respondents

No payment or gift of any kind will be provided to respondents.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

For the nomination forms, the website has a privacy policy statement indicating that no individual identification will be posted on the public website without the user's permission. Information about users will be reported at the aggregate level only. Contact information on nomination forms is used for the express purpose of clarifying the WWC user's nomination and will not be released beyond the WWC staff with an immediate need to clarify the submitted information.

The purpose of the Registry of Evaluation Researchers database is to allow evaluators to post their credentials and contact information to the public; therefore, it is assumed when evaluators submit their forms that they are not requesting confidentiality. The WWC does, however, offer evaluators the option of limited disclosure for studies. For example, respondents can request that proprietary information be kept confidential. This will typically only be requested when an evaluator is in the process of getting a study published and would like the WWC to post the study information only after it is publicly available. Additionally, the WWC will post only the provided contact and experience information; biographies, resumes, and curricula vitae will not be available through the WWC.

The purpose of the Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials is to enable researchers and other stakeholders to post information to the public regarding RCTs that are funded and in progress or completed, with an available final report; therefore, it is assumed when stakeholders submit their forms that they are not requesting confidentiality. The WWC will post only the provided

bibliographic information and study abstract; the full text of the study will not be available through the WWC.

11. Sensitive Questions

None of the requested information is sensitive in nature.

12. Estimates of Hour Burden

The total number of respondents for all WWC forms is estimated to be 1,600 across three years, with the total annualized responses at 534. The total number of burden hours for all collections is estimated to be 542.5, with the total annualized hours at 181. Hourly burden estimates by form and totals by year are displayed in Exhibit 2.

In January 2007, the initial collection was submitted for approval. The total number of respondents was estimated to be 21,820 across the three years, with the total annualized responses at 7,273. The total number of burden hours for all collections is estimated to be 2,581.66, with the total annualized hours at 861.

Experience operating the WWC has led to changes in necessary information requested from users, which likewise resulted in anticipated changes to hourly burden estimates. The proposed estimates for the revised collection reflect the following decreases:

- Total respondents: less 20,220
- Total annualized responses: less 6,739
- Total burden hours: less 2,039.16
- Total annualized burden hours: less 680

The estimated annualized cost to respondents, shown in Exhibit 3, is based on the average hourly wage ($19.29) as of June 2007, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics National Bulletin.[1]

[1] Available at http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ocs/sp/ncbl0910.pdf. Accessed June 16, 2009.

EXHIBIT 2
Estimates of Hourly Burden

Form	Year	Time to Complete	Number of Respondents	Hourly Burden
Intervention, Study, and Topic Nomination Forms	Y1	3 minutes	300	15
Registry of Evaluation Researchers	Y1	120 minutes	60	120
Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials	Y1	30 minutes	50	25
		Total, Year 1	*410*	*160*
Intervention, Study, and Topic Nomination Forms	Y2	3 minutes	300	15
Registry of Evaluation Researchers	Y2	120 minutes	30	60
Registry of Evaluation Researchers Update*	Y2	30 minutes	100	50
Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials	Y2	30 minutes	75	37.5
Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials Update*	Y2	15 minutes	40	10
		Total, Year 2	*545*	*172.5*
Intervention, Study, and Topic Nomination Forms	Y3	3 minutes	300	15
Registry of Evaluation Researchers	Y3	120 minutes	30	60
Registry of Evaluation Researchers Update*	Y3	30 minutes	100	50
Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials	Y3	30 minutes	125	62.5
Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials Update*	Y3	15 minutes	90	22.5
		Total, Year 3	*645*	*210*
		Total, Years 1–3	***1,600***	***542.5***

* The Registry of Evaluation Researchers and the Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials updates are not different forms. Rather, users are provided an opportunity to edit the information that already exists and is prepopulated in the appropriate completed form.

EXHIBIT 3
Estimates of Hourly Burden

Form	Year	Number of Respondents	Hourly Burden	Cost
Intervention, Study, and Topic Nomination Forms	Y1	300	15	$289.35
Registry of Evaluation Researchers	Y1	60	120	$2,314.80
Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials	Y1	50	25	$482.25
		Total, Year 1	*160*	*$3,086.40*
Intervention, Study, and Topic Nomination Forms	Y2	300	15	$289.35
Registry of Evaluation Researchers	Y2	30	60	$1,157.40
Registry of Evaluation Researchers Update	Y2	100	50	$964.50
Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials	Y2	75	37.5	$723.38
Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials Update	Y2	40	10	$192.90
		Total, Year 2	*172.5*	*$3,327.53*
Intervention, Study, and Topic Nomination Forms	Y3	300	15	$289.35
Registry of Evaluation Researchers	Y3	30	60	$1,157.40
Registry of Evaluation Researchers Update	Y3	100	50	$964.50
Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials	Y3	125	62.5	$1,205.63
Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials Update	Y3	90	22.5	$434.03
		Total, Year 3	*210*	*$4,050.90*
		Total, Years 1–3	***542.50***	***$10,464.83***

13. Estimate of Annual Cost Burden to Respondents

There are no start-up costs to respondents related to this collection or other costs not accounted for earlier.

14. Estimate of Annual Cost to the Federal Government

The total cost to the federal government for the nomination forms, Registry of Evaluation Researchers, and Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials is estimated at $48,205.08 across the three years, with the total annualized cost at $16,068.36. Exhibit 4 displays the costs for developing the Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials, administering all online forms and databases, and promoting and requesting input from the public in Year 1. Years 2 and 3 display the costs for maintaining and administering the online forms and databases, promoting and requesting input from the public, and analyzing and tabulating results. The total cost represents an $181,046.49 decrease from the original total cost estimate in January 2007.

EXHIBIT 4
Estimated Cost to Federal Government, by Year

Year	Total Number of Respondents	Maintenance and Administration	Development	Total
Year 1	410	$3,373.30	$35,038.08	$38,411.38
Year 2	545	$4,485.35	$0.00	$4,485.35
Year 3	645	$5,308.35	$0.00	$5,308.35
Total	***1,600***	***$13,167.00***	***$35,038.08***	***$48,205.08***

15. Program Changes or Adjustment

This set of information collections will result in an annual burden of 160 hours in Year 1, 172.5 hours in Year 2, and 210 hours in Year 3. The annualized hours total is 181, which is a decrease of 680 hours from the initial collection estimate in January 2007. Based on the numbers of public submissions we have received in the past two years, we have adjusted the figures down to estimate the number of future responses more accurately.

16. Plans for Tabulation and Publication of Results

The majority of tabulations of the information collected under this request will be for internal use by WWC contractors and Department of Education staff. The information will be used to ascertain the needs of the public and to take their suggestions, as well as to monitor how well the WWC is meeting their needs.

17. Approval to Not Display OMB Expiration

This approval is not requested.

18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

There are no exceptions.

ATTACHMENTS

Revised Forms for Existing and Approved Collection

01 Study Submission Form

02 Intervention Nomination Form

03 Topic Nomination Form

04 Registry of Evaluation Researchers Form

05 Registry of Evaluation Researchers Commitment Letter

Proposed New Forms

06 Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials (text documentation)

07 Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials (details)

08 Registry of Randomized Controlled Trials Commitment Letter