

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Institute of Standards and Technology
NIST Construction Grant Program Application Requirements
OMB Control No. 0693-0055

A. JUSTIFICATION

The is a request to extend the Office of Management and Budget approval of this information collection.

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

The NIST Construction Grant Program is a competitive financial assistance (grant) program for research science buildings through the construction of new buildings or expansion of existing buildings. For purposes of this program, “research science building” means a building or facility whose purpose is to conduct scientific research, including laboratories, test facilities, measurement facilities, research computing facilities, and observatories. In addition, “expansion of existing buildings” means that space to conduct scientific research is being expanded from what is currently available for the supported research activities.

The statutory authorities for this program are the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009 (Public Law 111-8) and anticipated future annual appropriations.

To receive funding, applicants must submit proposals in response to NIST competition notices announcing the availability of funds and request for proposals (RFPs), which are published in the *Federal Register* and Grants.gov Web site. This request is for the information collection requirements associated with applying for funding. The intent of the collection is to meet programmatic requirements, as well as compliance with 15 C.F.R. Part 14.

Additionally, changes reflected in this PRA package include the new NIST-1102 Letter of Intent form, removal of the NIST-1101B, and explicit instructions on the format for submission of full proposals, e.g., font and paper size, margins, etc.

2. Explain how, by whom, how 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 applicable NIST Information Quality Guidelines.

NIST issues competition notices announcing the availability of funds and RFPs in the *Federal Register* and Grants.gov Web site after funding becomes available in the annual appropriations. The Federal Funding Opportunity posted on the Grants.gov Web site provides detailed guidance for submitting grant proposals for funding projects under the NIST Construction Grant Program. Attached is a summary of the required information for proposal submission. This includes submission of the forms (1) NIST-1102, Letter of Intent; (2) NIST-1101, Budget Narrative; and (3) NIST-1101A Details on Unallowable Project Costs, if applicable. A completed NIST-1102, Letter of Intent, is mandatory and must be submitted prior to submission of a full proposal. The NIST-1101 is mandatory and must be submitted with the full proposal. The NIST-1101 provides details on what the Federal grant funds will be used for. The NIST-1101A is an optional form that provides details on unallowable project costs.

An initial administrative review will be conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the proposal. Responsive and complete proposals will be considered further. Proposals that are non-responsive and/or incomplete will be eliminated. Each of the remaining proposals will receive a minimum of three independent reviews, which will include written evaluations and scores, based on the evaluation criteria. The construction merit review may be performed by non-Federal Engineers or Architects. No consensus advice will be given. The individual proposal evaluations and scores will be considered by an Evaluation Board(s) (a committee made up of Federal employees), and this Evaluation Board(s) will present ranking and funding recommendations based on the evaluation criteria to a Selecting Official for further consideration. Based on the evaluations and ranking prepared by the Evaluation Board and consideration of selection factors, a Selecting Official selects funding recipients.

The information collected is essential for NIST to perform the appropriate review of a proposal to determine if a project should be selected for funding.

This information collection and dissemination will comply with the NIST Information Quality Guidelines and Standards.

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.

Full proposals may be submitted electronically via Grants.gov (www.grants.gov). Standard Forms are used and the burden hours associated with the preparation of the standard forms are not included in this request (a list of required forms and information is attached).

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

The NIST Construction Grant Program was funded for the first time in fiscal year 2008. Funding has been made available in fiscal year 2009 under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) (Public Law 111-5) and the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009 (Public Law 111-8). As a new program NIST's information collection needs to accomplish the goals and objectives of the program. There are no other collections that gather similar information. The information requested is unique to each financial assistance proposal. No duplication of effort exists with other Federal government information collection efforts. Some of the questions may overlap with material provided in other parts of another Federal financial assistance proposal. If appropriate, the applicant may simply copy the information from those parts of the proposal and paste it as appropriate.

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

The collection of information under this program has no impact on small for-profit businesses as they are not eligible to participate.

With respect to other small non-profits, every effort has been made to streamline the information collection requirement for ease of all applicants, especially small non-profits. Consideration was given to the expense involved in preparing proposals. The type of information being collected is essential for

NIST to be able to perform the appropriate technical reviews so that the most meritorious proposals are selected for funding. The information collected is readily available to the potential applicant and, thus, does not impose an unnecessary or additional burden.

Notices announcing the availability of funds and RFPs are published in the *Federal Register* and Grants.gov. These notices provide the public with the specific information on funding availability, guidelines for proposal submission, proposal deadlines, etc. Additionally competition notices are available on the Internet. NIST believes the burden on potential small no-profit applicants is small in comparison to the benefits that would accrue if their proposals were funded.

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, NIST will not be able to obtain the information required to evaluate the merits of a proposal. A proposal is essential to collect the required technical and budget information for reviewers to determine the worthiness of a proposal. NIST would not be able to accomplish its mission without soliciting proposals, evaluating them, and making funding decisions in accordance with the authorizing legislation.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

The proposed collection of information will be conducted in a manner that is consistent with OMB guidelines.

8. Provide information for 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 record keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

The notice soliciting public comment was published on September 8, 2009 (Vol. 74, pg. 46083). No comments were received.

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

Respondents whose proposals are selected for funding receive awards using the grant financial assistance-funding instrument. No other payments or gifts are provided to respondents.

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

The government will protect confidential/proprietary information on business operations and trade secrets possessed by any applicant to the full extent of the law. Such information will be withheld from disclosure pursuant to the following statutes:

- a. Trade Secrets Act - 18 U.S.C. § 1905 (http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=browse_usc&docid=Cite:+18USC1905).
- b. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) - 5 U.S.C. § 552(b) (http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=browse_usc&docid=Cite:+5USC552).
- c. Economic Espionage Act – 18 U.S.C. § 1832 (http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=browse_usc&docid=Cite:+18USC1832).

In the collection, review, and handling of information in proposals, NIST presumes that all proposals contain confidential/proprietary information, whether or not so identified by the applicant. All individuals who have access to proposals must sign a Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Agreement.

If an award is issued, the original proposal is maintained in the NIST official award file. Some copies are shredded and the remaining copies are maintained under strict security. The security proposal handling procedures require a strict sign out/in tracking system. All but one copy of unfunded proposals are shredded after each competition.

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 burden hours for the collection of information are estimated at 125,000 based on approximately 250 proposals at 500 hours per proposal. A breakdown of burden hours for proposal submission is as follows:

Read instructions, plan activities, and gather information	20 hours
Prepare project narrative	300 hours
Prepare Required Forms	100 hours
Professional Review of Proposal	40 hours
Clerical preparations (data input, assembly, text editing, photocopying, etc.)	<u>40 hours</u>
	500 hours

The burden hours include preparation of the NIST-1102, Letter of Intent, which is estimated to take approximately 10 minutes. The 500 burden hours are mainly for preparation of the full proposal.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record-keepers resulting from the collection of information (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).

None anticipated. Potential applicants that submit the Letter of Intent are unlikely to incur any direct mit their full proposals electronically (approximately 75 percent anticipated out of 250 proposals for a total of 187) will not incur any duplicating costs. Applicants that elect to submit their full proposal by paper (approximately 25 percent out of 250 proposals for a total of 62), are unlikely to incur any direct costs for duplicating as they will be included in the organization's overhead pool.

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

An average of approximately 16 professional hours and 1 clerical hour are needed for proposal review. Using loaded wage rates of \$87 per hour for professional time and \$33 per hour for clerical time, each proposal costs the government approximately \$1,425 [(\$87 x 16 = \$1,392) + (\$33 x 1 = \$33)]. For approximately 250 proposals, the review process cost is \$356,250 (\$1,425 x 250). The total professional cost is \$348,000 (\$1,392 x 250) and the total clerical cost is \$8,250 (\$33 x 250) for a total of \$356,250.

If approximately 15 proposals are selected for funding, an additional 1 clerical hour is required for final processing, yielding a cost of \$33 per proposal (1 x \$33). For approximately 15 proposals that may be selected for funding, the total clerical cost is \$495 (\$33 x 15).

In summary, the estimate of annualized cost to the Federal government for the proposal review process is **\$356,745** (\$356,250 + \$495).

Note that not every proposal will receive the same number of reviews as some will drop out during prescreening. The above calculations are based on estimates. Grants administration costs are not included because they are a normal and customary part of the functions of NIST.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

The estimated number of applicants reduced from 500 to 250; and the burden hours reduced from 250,000 to 125,000 based on two years of program activity.

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

Not applicable. The information collected will not be published for statistical use.

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. Expiration date will be displayed on forms.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

Not applicable. No exception to the certification statement is requested.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection of information does not employ statistical methods.

NIST CONSTRUCTION GRANT PROGRAM REQUIRED INFORMATION FOR PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

1. Letter of Intent (NIST-1102) (required)

A completed NIST-1102, Letter of Intent, is mandatory and must be submitted prior to submission of a full proposal. A full proposal may not be submitted unless NIST has received the required NIST-1102, Letter of Intent, by the deadline and the applicant has received an acknowledgement letter from NIST. If a full proposal is submitted to NIST from an applicant who did not submit the required NIST-1102, Letter of Intent, the full proposal will be rejected and returned to the applicant without review. It is expected that the NIST-1102, Letter of Intent, will be reviewed for eligibility of proposed applicant and proposed project, and whether or not the scientific research to be performed in the building/facility will complement one or more programs of DoC's three science organizations' Program Priorities. NIST will send an acknowledgement of the NIST-1102, Letter of Intent, to all applicants who timely submit a NIST-1102, Letter of Intent.

Each eligible applicant organization may submit only one NIST-1102, Letter of Intent, in response to a solicitation. Submission of multiple NIST-1102, Letters of Intent, from one applicant organization is not allowed. If more than one NIST-1102, Letter of Intent, is received from the same applicant organization, NIST will acknowledge receipt of each and provide notice that if more than one full proposal is received from the same applicant organization at the time of full proposal submission, all full proposals from that same applicant organization will be rejected and returned without review.

The NIST-1102, Letter of Intent, may only be submitted by paper. An original and two copies of the NIST-1102, Letter of Intent, must be submitted to the following address:

National Institute of Standards and Technology
Construction Grant Program
100 Bureau Drive, Stop 4701
Gaithersburg, MD 20899-4701
(Attn: Anneke Tingle – 301-975-5060)

Failure to provide all required information on the NIST-1102, Letter of Intent, may result in rejection.

2. Full Proposal Requirements and Application Package

For electronic proposal submission, the forms listed in 3.a. through 3.d. below are available as part of the Grants.gov application package and can be completed through the download application process. For paper proposal submission, fillable forms listed in 3.a. through 3.d. below are available on the NIST Web site at www.nist.gov/construction. For both electronic and paper proposal submissions, the forms listed in 3.e. through 3.h. are available on the NIST Web site www.nist.gov/construction. Requests for paper copies of the application package can be made to Christopher Hunton at 301-975-5718 or christopher.hunton@nist.gov or to Sue Li at 301-975-8817 or sue.li@nist.gov.

3. Content and Form of Application/Full Proposal Submission

Complete full proposals must include the following forms and documents:

- a. SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance (required)

- b. SF-424C, Budget Information – Construction Projects for each year of the project plus one for all years (cumulative) (required)
- c. SF-424D, Assurances - Construction Programs (required)
- d. SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (required)
- e. CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying (required)
- f. NIST-1101, NIST Construction Grant Program Budget Narrative (required)
- g. NIST-1101A, NIST Construction Grant Program Details on Unallowable Project Costs (if applicable)
- h. CD-~~X~~, U.S. Department of Commerce National Environmental Policy (NEPA) Environmental Questionnaire & Checklist (required)
- i. Technical Proposal (required)
- j. Letters of Commitment for Cost Sharing (required)

If submitting a proposal electronically via Grants.gov, items 3.a through 3.d. above are part of the mandatory application package in Grants.gov. Items 3.e. through 3.j. are to be completed and attached as a single PDF document to item 15 of the SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance.

If submitting by paper, all of the mandatory full proposal documents should be submitted in the order listed above.

Technical Proposal Preparation Instructions

The Technical Proposal is a word-processed document written by the applicant. The Technical Proposal must contain the following sections in the order listed:

- a. **Executive Summary** (maximum length, 1 page). Describe the proposed construction project scope for the building/facility and the type of scientific research planned that is unlikely to be achieved without the new research facility and potential impacts. Describe how the scientific research to be performed in the building/facility will complement one or more programs of DoC’s three science organizations’ program priorities.
- b. **Project Narrative** (maximum length, 29 pages). The Project Narrative must address each of the three evaluation criteria. It should include an in depth description of the planned research use or scientific/technical goals for the research space, the key research personnel that will use the building/facility, the research capabilities of the organization, the research activities that become possible with the building/facility that are not feasible with the organization’s current research infrastructure, the scope of the construction project, the project monitoring methods to be used, the detailed schedule, the key construction personnel working on the project and their qualifications, and the construction management capabilities of the organization. Additionally, in preparing the Technical Proposal, the selection factors should be taken into account.

The Project Narrative must be organized with the following section headings, which address the three evaluation criteria:

- (1) **Scientific and Technical Merit of the Proposed Use of the Facility and the Need for Federal Funding**
 - i. **Research Activities and Potential Impacts**
 - ii. **Need for Federal Funding**
- (2) **Design Description of the Research Facility**
- (3) **Project Management Plan**
 - i. **Description of Project Scope and Requirements**

- ii. **Project Time Schedule and Linkage to the Budget**
- iii. **Capability to Manage the Project**
- iv. **Financial Commitments to Implement the Plan**

The suggested length for section (1) is 9-14 pages. The suggested length for sections (2) and (3) together is 15-20 pages not to exceed 29 pages combined.

Letters of Commitment for Cost Sharing

Cost sharing included in the proposed project budget requires letters of commitment from individuals or organizations that are providing the cost sharing. Letters of commitment for cost sharing do not count towards the page limit. General “letters of support” are not required and will be counted towards the page limit for the Technical Proposal if included in the proposal. A summary listing of this support is allowed but will count towards the page limit. It is inappropriate for any Federal staff to provide critique or feedback on project ideas, etc., and it is also inappropriate to ask Federal employees for a letter of support.

NIST is not accepting pre-proposals under this program.

Full Proposal Format

- a. **Bindings.** If submitting by paper rather than electronically, clip the original signed proposal (do not bind) and bind the two copies securely. Bindings that permit the proposal to lie flat while being read are preferred. Loose-leaf ring binder copies are not acceptable.
- b. **Double-sided copy.** For paper submissions, print on both sides of the paper (front to back counts as two pages).
- c. **E-mail Submissions of NIST-1102, Letter of Intent, and Full Proposal.** Will not be accepted.
- d. **Facsimile Submissions (fax) of NIST-1102, Letter of Intent, and Full Proposal.** Will not be accepted.
- e. **Figures, graphs, images, and pictures.** Should be of a size that is easily readable or viewable and may be landscape.
- f. **Font.** Times New Roman or Arial preferred or equivalent and readable (12-point minimum, including text in charts, graphs, and images).
- g. **Line spacing.** Single.
- h. **Margins.** One (1) inch top, bottom, left, and right.
- i. **Number of copies if submitting by paper rather than electronically.** A signed unbound original and two bound copies. If the original proposal is in color, the two copies must also be in color. If the proposal is submitted electronically, paper copies are not required.
- j. **Page layout.** Portrait only. However, landscape page layout may be used only for figures, graphs, images, and pictures.

- k. **Page limit.** Thirty (30) pages for Technical Proposal (1-page maximum for the Executive Summary and 29-page maximum for the Project Narrative).

Page limit excludes: SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance; SF-424C, Budget Information – Construction Projects; SF-424D, Assurances - Construction Programs; SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities; CD-511, Certification Regarding Lobbying; NIST-1101, NIST Construction Grant Program Budget Narrative; NIST-1101A, NIST Construction Grant Program Details on Unallowable Project Costs; CD-X, U.S. Department of Commerce National Environmental Policy (NEPA) Environmental Questionnaire & Checklist; and Letters of Commitment for Cost Sharing.

Page limit includes: All text, schematics, diagrams, flowcharts, tables, pictures, images, illustrations, and resumes. To maximize pages for relevant technical information, the following suggestions are offered:

- (1) List data only for the key people and briefly highlight their education and experience. Do not include lengthy resumes for all people involved in the project.
- (2) Do not include copies of published papers as appendices.
- (3) Do not include supplemental material not specifically requested, either separately or bound with the proposal.
- (4) Do not include general letters of support.

- l. **Page numbering.** Number pages sequentially.

- m. **Paper size.** 21.6 by 27.9 centimeters (8 ½ by 11 inches).

- n. **Proposal language.** English.

- o. **Table of contents.** Do not include; not required. If included, will count towards page limit.

- p. **Typed document.** All proposals, including forms, must be typed; handwritten proposals and forms will not be accepted.