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**National Women's Business Council (NWBC)**  
**Supporting Statement for Paperwork Reduction Act Submission**

**Focus Group Research: Young Women Entrepreneurs**

**A. Justification**

1. Necessary Collection

The National Women's Business Council (NWBC or Council) is a bi-partisan federal advisory council created to serve as an independent source of advice and counsel to the President, Congress and the US Small Business Administration on issues of importance to women business owners. The NWBC authority is codified at 15 U.S.C. § 7105.

15 U.S.C.  
United States Code, 2011 Edition  
Title 15 - COMMERCE AND TRADE  
CHAPTER 97 - WOMEN'S BUSINESS ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT  
Sec. 7105 - Establishment of the National Women's Business Council  
From the U.S. Government Printing Office, [www.gpo.gov](http://www.gpo.gov)

§7105. Establishment of the National Women's Business Council

There is established a council to be known as the National Women's Business Council, which shall serve as an independent source of advice and policy recommendations to the Interagency Committee, to the Administrator through the Assistant Administrator of the Office of Women's Business Ownership, to the Congress, and to the President.

(Pub. L. 100–533, title IV, §405, as added Pub. L. 103–403, title IV, §413, Oct. 22, 1994, 108 Stat. 4195.)

Prior Provisions

A prior section 405 of Pub. L. 100–533, title IV, Oct. 25, 1988, 102 Stat. 2696, related to powers of the National Women's Business Council, prior to the general amendment of title IV of Pub. L. 100–533 by Pub. L. 103–403.

In order to provide solid policy advice, the Council is tasked in their statutory authority with conducting "such studies and other research relating to the award of Federal prime contracts and subcontracts to women-owned businesses, to access to credit and investment capital by women entrepreneurs, or to other issues relating to women-owned businesses, as the Council determines to be appropriate." 15 U.S.C 7109a.

One of the National Women's Business Council's priorities in 2012-2013 is to better understand young women entrepreneurs (ages 18-34 years) and how they may be similar or different from young men entrepreneurs and older women entrepreneurs. At this time in the literature, specific research pertaining specifically to young women entrepreneurs is absent. Extensive literature searches and various resources have been used to verify the lack of data in this area. Thus, the data to be collected under this mechanism will allow for a unique contribution to the literature and establish a baseline understanding of this demographic group.

## 2. Purpose of Information Collection

One of the Council's duties is to develop and promote new bold initiatives, policies and programs designed to support women's business enterprises at all stages of development in the public and private sector marketplaces- from start-up to success and to significance. The purpose of the information to be collected is to fulfill a gap in knowledge that currently exists. We are conducting qualitative research to gain further insights into these issues so that future research, policies, and programs may be shaped by the knowledge gained from this research. The Council will use the information gathered from the focus groups to make recommendations in support of initiatives, policies and programs initiated by the Small Business Administration and by the President and Congress.

## 3. Collection Techniques

A literature review and meta-analysis was conducted to target the main theme areas (topics) for this data collection. These were identified areas that had gaps in the literature or information not sensitive enough for detection to the aims of the research. Entrepreneur organizations and business groups will be the target group for inclusion in the data collection throughout the United States (classified into general regions) and those groups and organizations will be contacted by the NWBC and/or its contractor EmpiriStat, Inc. for interest in the research through telephone and email contact.

During the literature review process, the focus group design and methodology was drafted. Notice and request for comments was posted in the Federal Register (Vol 77, No. 224) on the study design, methodology and response burden. Further evaluations of data ensued, and the study design and methodology were further refined based on aggregate data synthesis of the existing literature.

This research will attempt to recruit a diverse group of participants, but is not based upon a statistical sample that can be generalized to a target population. An established inclusion and exclusion criteria for selection of participants has been developed and refined to limit the participants to the targeted studygroup.

“Entrepreneur” will be clearly defined for the participants. We will reach out to a convenience sample of organizations that will broadcast the research to their members and solicit their participation. All eligible participants will then be offered a short electronic questionnaire to complete via the internet (15-20 minutes), and if they are willing to participate in a 90 minute focus group in person, they will indicate that willingness on the electronic questionnaire.

From all willing participants who completed the questionnaire in each region and interested in participating in the focus group, a stratified random sample (without replacement) will be drawn (if more participants respond in the affirmative for participating in the focus groups) in order to balance the focus groups in terms of the participant’s gender and age for each geographic location.

In order to reduce burden to the respondent, the questionnaire will be completely electronic and executed through SurveyMonkey through an SSL encryption transmission and one username/password combination. They may take the survey at their convenience and submit that questionnaire within the applicable study timelines. No names or identifying information will be requested or recorded, except the email address released from the Entrepreneur Organization in order to send the questionnaire link. Any SurveyMonkey fees and programming will be paid and executed by the Contractor directly.

Focus groups will be face-to-face and conducted by the Key Researcher of the project and will last no longer than 90 minutes for each focus group conducted. Focus groups will be audio recorded and all participants will be briefed on the requirements of the group and that the audio recording will be deleted after transcription of the session is completed and verified by the Key Researcher.

The methodology defined above is a refinement from the Federal Register Notice for this research in the following ways:

- We have defined the methods for how we will find the focus group volunteers (contact entrepreneur organizations, ask for them to email questionnaire or allow us to email to membership, ask for volunteers).
- We have refined the electronic questionnaire to be 15-20 minutes from start to finish in length for all interested volunteers to complete.
- The focus group participants will not complete another questionnaire during the focus group. This has been eliminated as redundant data collection effort.
- Focus groups will be conducted in person by the Key Researcher and not using remote communication tools in order to gain more personal interaction and to invoke conversation and participation.

However, the brief questionnaire will be implemented using an email weblink and online survey to reduce burden.

- The qualitative research will consist of 9 focus groups with 120 focus group participants across 3 different US regions. This has been reduced from the original proposal of 12 focus group and 140 focus group participants across 4 US regions. The ratio of the focus groups will remain at 2:2:1 (but will be 16:16:8 per site).
- The focus group time has been reduced from 120 minutes to 90 minutes. Due to the implementation of the brief questionnaire, the focus groups will be more focused and information will be able to be addressed more efficiently.

#### 4. Duplication Identification

General information is available for woman entrepreneurs and more in depth information is available for male entrepreneurs. However, information, data and literature is very limited and often not available specifically for younger women entrepreneurs. Efforts have been made to identify any duplication in data collection efforts with existing data, and, through a detailed literature review and synthesis of existing research, this effort is primarily focused on collecting specific data corresponding to the research objectives with minor confirmatory data collection.

#### 5. Information Collection Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities

The collection of information may be from women and men that own small businesses. The impact of that data collection may impact the running of their small business for the time of the 15 minute questionnaire that they volunteer to complete and if they are selected and volunteer for a 90 minute focus group; however, this overall impact will be quite minimal. Their time will be on a volunteer basis for completing a brief questionnaire and volunteering to participate in one focus group (90 minutes). To encourage participation from entrepreneurs, the focus groups will be conducted after normal business hours. Questionnaires may be completed at any time 24 hours a day/7 days a week at their choosing.

#### 6. Consequences if Collection is Not Conducted or Conducted Less Frequently

If this information is not collected, a gap in the literature consistently remains. In addition, future federal programs may or may not be advanced or developed if this information is not collected in this area of young women entrepreneurs.

#### 7. Special Circumstances That Would Cause an Information Collection to be Conducted in the Following Manners:

- a. Requires Respondents to Report Information to the Agency More Often than Quarterly  
Not applicable
- b. Requires Respondents to Prepare a Written Response to a Collection of Information in Fewer than 30 Days After Receipt  
Not Applicable
- c. Requires Respondents to Submit More than an Original and Two Copies of Any Document  
Not Applicable
- d. Requires Respondents to Retain Records, Other than Health, Medical, Government Contract, Grant-in-Aid, or Tax Records, for More than Five Years  
Not Applicable
- e. Is in Connection with the Statistical Survey, That is Not Designed to Produce Valid and Reliable Results that Can be Generalized to the Universe of Study  
Not Applicable
- f. Requires the Use of a Statistical Data Classification That Has Not Been Reviewed and Approved by OMB  
Not Applicable
- g. Includes a Pledge of Confidentiality that is Not Supported by Disclosure and Data Security Policies that are Consistent with the Pledge, or Which Unnecessarily Impedes the Sharing of Data with Other Agencies for Compatible Confidential Use  
Not Applicable
- h. Requires Respondents to Submit Proprietary Trade Secrets or Other Confidential Information Unless the Agency Can Demonstrate That It Has Instituted Procedures to Protect the Information's Confidentiality to the Extent Permitted by Law  
Not Applicable

8. Publication of Notice in Federal Register

The public comment notice required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d) was published in the Federal Register. A copy of the publication in the Federal Register is attached. This Notice appeared in the "Federal Register / 77 FR 69660 on Tuesday, November 20, 2012." No public comments were received during the comment review period. EmpiriStat, Inc. was contracted to conduct a thorough review of peer-reviewed publications and current literature in the field to determine the current status of the data and to provide professional guidance for data collection identification, study design, data collection, and statistical analysis.

9. Payment to Respondents

Payments and gifts will not be issued to respondents. However, refreshments during focus groups may be offered in the form of a drink and/or snack.

#### 10. Assurance of Respondent Confidentiality

All questionnaires will be completed by participants that choose to complete the questionnaire via an internet link. No names will be used for the questionnaire; unless the participant(s) choose to provide their name in order to participate in the focus group or be chosen to participate in the focus group. Focus group participants will not be identified by name during the session. All questionnaire data analysis will be presented in aggregate form; and not individually. Focus group data will be presented in aggregate as applicable, and testimonials and comments may be presented for an individual but no names will be used. .

#### 11. Necessity of Questions of a Sensitive Nature

Questions of a sensitive nature will not be included (questions involving sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs and other similar matters). Income, profit, and debt questions may be asked, but that information will not be linked to any specific individual in any identifiable way. This data will be presented and summarized in aggregate form only.

#### 12. Estimation of Time Burden for Respondents

It is estimated that approximately 10 organizations will distribute the research information in regards to the questionnaire to approximately 450 subjects in each of the three geographic areas selected (N=1350). The organizations may directly distribute the information electronically to an email distribution list, or the organization may provide the email distribution list to the Contractor for information dissemination. However, burden on the organizations will be minimal (approximately 2 hours). An introduction will be made to the organization via a 10-15 minute telephone call followed by an email about 4 minutes to read in length to explain the study. Follow-up to the call and/or email will be made once for participation (5-10 minutes). If the organization will participate, the weblink and the associated information for distribution will be sent for distribution (10 minutes to review), and the organization will either distribute it to their database (30 minutes), or send the database to the NWBC for distribution of the information.

Eligible respondents meeting the entrepreneur definition is expected to be quite high in these targeted organizations (60%, or 810 subjects). Based on this denominator we expect a 40% response rate for a resulting sample of 324 participants. At 15 minutes to complete a questionnaire, a total of 81 hours of participant burden will be required at this stage of data collection.

Of the 324 collected questionnaires, we expect at least a 55% positive response rate to the question of their participation in a focus group (n=178). This subject population is a motivated population, and the response rate may be even higher.

With 178 potential participants (approximately 59 subjects in each city/region), 40 subjects will be required for each of the three focus groups (16 young women, 16 older women and 8 men). If fewer participants respond, sampling will not be needed and all volunteers will be asked to participate in the focus groups. If sampling is needed due to a large response, a stratified sample within each city/region will be employed based on gender and age for women.

The total burden on the focus group participants will be 180 hours.

13. Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents or Record keepers.

Not applicable.

Estimation of Cost Burden for Respondents

a. Total Capital and Start-up Cost

Not applicable.

b. Total Operation and Maintenance and Purchase of Services

Not applicable.

14. Annual Costs to Federal Government

A detailed breakdown of the total annualized cost to the Federal Government is submitted below. The work will be performed by the Key Researcher contracted by the NWBC.

This is a firm-fixed price contract for one time data collection.

Questionnaire Tasks	Firm Fixed Price
<b>Focus Group Tasks</b>	
Development of Questions	\$ 72,500.00
Development of Questionnaire	
Coding of Questionnaire	
SurveyMonkey Subscription Upgrade by Contractor	
Travel and Other Direct Costs (ODCs)	

Key researcher, including prep and management	
Respondent Recruiting	
Drinks and Snacks for Focus Groups	
Focus Group Location Room Rental	
Equipment rental	
Transportation and lodging for Key researcher	
Transcription	
Analysis and Reports	

Three sessions in each location in the evenings- Total of 12 Focus Groups

15. Program Changes/Adjustments

Not Applicable. New data collection.

16. Plans for Tabulation and Publication

2013 Time Schedule for Project:

January-March: Create, update and finalize focus group protocol and implementation procedures

February-April: Prepare PRA package and receive OMB approval

February: Contact entrepreneur organizations for questionnaire distribution

March: Create a priori analysis plan and table and listing shells for final report appendix

May: Distribute Questionnaire Link to organizations and collect data and Determine composition of focus groups from completed Questionnaires (this step commenced after OMB clearance received).



June-July: Conduct 12 focus groups, transcribe and review

June-September: Analyze findings. Draft report and PowerPoint presentation based upon results. Edit as needed.

September 25, 2013: Final report and final PowerPoint completed

After completion, the report will be published on the NWBC's website (October 2013).

Analysis Methods:

All analysis methods will be described in an a priori written analysis plan. The questionnaire will collect quantitative data and the data gathered during the focus group data will be qualitative. Focus group data will be summarized across the main theme questions, using representative quotes from the focus group participants. Transcription will occur following each of the focus groups and initial codes will be generated from the data that have a recurring pattern. Themes will then be summarized for defining and naming for the report.

A description of how the themes and concepts were derived from the focus group data will be included (inductive or deductive process). The analysis of the focus group will not be limited to just those issues that the researcher thinks are important (anticipated themes), but will also consider issues that participants raise (emergent themes). Outlying or negative/deviant cases that do not fit with the central interpretation will also be presented. No statistical comparisons will be made from the focus group data.

Questionnaire data will be summarized by tabulations of mean, standard deviation, median, and range for continuous data and frequency and percent for categorical data. Data may be presented in tables and/or figures. This information is not statistically representative of a larger target population, but may provide some useful context and descriptive information about the participants in the focus groups and the members of the organizations from which they came from.

Publication Plans:

Findings from the Questionnaire and focus group data will be presented in a Final Report and through a slide set to be posted on the NWBC website. NWBC will share the findings directly with the US Small Business Administration, Congress and the President.

17. Reasons for Not Displaying OMB Approval Expiration Date

We are not seeking approval for withholding the OMB approval expiration date. We will disclose the OMB control number and expiration date to the participants and also inform them that their participation is voluntary at all stages of the research. This information will be provided in the invitation with distribution of the

weblink to the questionnaire and at the start of the focus groups for those participants.

18. Explanation of Exceptions to Certification Statement or "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions" (Item 19, OMB Form 83-I)

Not applicable. No exceptions to the certification statement are requested.

**B. Collection of Information Employing Statistical Methods**

1. Description of Potential Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

A convenience sample of Entrepreneur focused organizations and associations (national and local) in three city/areas from specific geographic regions of the United States will be identified (West, East, South/MidWest).

Identified organizations (approximately 10) will be contacted by the NWBC and asked to participate (distribute questionnaires by email to membership or to share email membership list with the Contractor for questionnaire distribution accordingly to that organization's policies ). It is estimated that organizations will distribute the research information in regards to the questionnaire to 450 or more total organization members in each city/region.

Eligible respondents meeting the entrepreneur definition and all inclusion criteria and no exclusion criteria are expected to be quite high in these targeted organizations (60%, or 810 subjects). Based on this denominator we expect a 40% response rate for a resulting sample of 324 participants (motivated population).

Of the 324 collected questionnaires, we expect a 55% positive response rate to the question of the respondent's participation in a focus group. This subject population is a motivated population, and the response rate may be even higher, given that focus group times will be held in the evening and at a convenient location with ample parking. With a 55% positive rate, we expect 178 potential participants for the focus group across the three geographic areas.

A stratified simple random sample based on gender and age (for women) from the 178 or more potential participants will be conducted in a 2:2:1 ratio using nQueryAdvisor 7.0 (Statistical Solutions Ltd.). Stratified groups will be young women entrepreneurs (18-35 years of age), older women entrepreneurs (>35 years of age), and men (ages 18 years and older). Sampling will be performed at the city/region level, resulting in a total of 120 focus group participants (16:16:8 subjects at each site). Oversampling of 20% will occur to account for potential declines and no-shows at the time of the focus group. If less than 178 participants respond in the affirmative for participation, sampling may not be needed, and all volunteers will be approached for inclusion in the focus groups.

The participants completing the questionnaires and those participating in the focus groups do not constitute a statistical sample that can be generalized to a target population with known sampling error. We have taken the approach of going through a convenience sample of organizations in different areas of the country in order to obtain a diverse sample of a difficult to find and reach population. The main goal of this research is to obtain rich insights using qualitative methods, not to produce statistical representative estimates of a target population. All reports from this research will make the strengths and limitations of our methodology clear.

2. Total burden of the participants for the questionnaires is 81 hours and for the focus groups 180 hours (total of 261 hours).

3. Procedures for Collection of Information

a. Statistical Methodology for Stratification and Sample Selection

Convenience sampling will be employed in selecting organizations and participants in the focus group will be self-selected. We will use the information from the questionnaire to select focus group participants with the desired composition and to reflect a diverse group of participants.

b. Estimation Procedure

c. No statistical estimate will be produced from this research. We will provide basic descriptive statistics on the characteristics of those participants who completed the questionnaire and the focus group participants to illustrate the diversity of our sample. These results cannot be directly compared to or generalized to a target population as they are based on a convenience sample. c. Degree of Accuracy Needed for Purpose Described in the Justification

d. d. Unusual Problems Requiring Specialized Sampling Procedures

None.

e. e. Any Use of Periodic (Less Frequent than Annual) Data Collection Cycles to Reduce Burden

No. One time data collection for questionnaires and one time data collection during focus groups.

3. Methods for Maximum Response Rates and Dealing with Non-Response Issues

Entrepreneur Organizations:

- Introduction from the NWBC and development of relationship with organization.

- Ask Organization to write brief support statement for research to be distributed with questionnaire web link or to use provided support statement template from Contractor.
- Follow-up by EmpiriStat, Inc. with organization if needed for explanation of research and process (methods and requirements).
- Provision of options to the organization: distribution of questionnaire via web link to membership by organization or sharing of membership email list with NWBC/Contractor.
- Solicit a total number of organizations for participation that cumulatively has a membership of over 600 members in that city/area.

Questionnaire Responses:

- 7 day, 14 day and 21 day reminder to membership for completing the questionnaire (by Organization/NWBC) and then close-out of questionnaire at 30 days post distribution.
- No methods for imputation of missing data on questionnaire (not statistically appropriate). All missing data will be reported in the statistical analysis in order for correct interpretation of denominators.
- Provide well in advance the date, location and time(s) of the focus groups for the applicable city on the questionnaire.

Focus Group Participation:

- Send a thank you and follow-up to all responders on Questionnaire indicating that they would like to participate in the Focus Groups. Provide rationale and date, time and location of the focus groups for planning purposes. Indicate that a random sampling procedure will be performed (if sample population is larger than sample size required for the focus groups). Require RSVP from potential participants.
- Invite 20% additional participants per focus group to account for last minute no-shows.
- Follow-up thank you same day with calendar invite in Outlook to email of participant with all details included. Monitor for declines of invitation and invite replacement(s) if applicable.
- Personal telephone call 7 days in advance of the focus group to remind them of participation. Monitor for declines and invite replacement if applicable.

- Email reminder 24 hours in advance of focus group meeting. Monitor for decline(s) and invite replacement(s) if applicable.
4. Tests of Procedures and Methods

The final Questionnaire will be tested within the NWBC and the Key Researcher will pilot the questionnaire within her Business Network International business group (a similar population to the target population; n<10). Testers will be instructed to complete the questionnaire and any questions that they do not understand, to indicate the confusion they may have had on that particular question. The Key Researcher will review these questionnaires and consider the impact of tester notes for potential revision of the questionnaire prior to release. No other testing or methods will be utilized.

5. Names and Contact Information for Individuals Responsible for Statistical Design and Name of Agency, Contractor(s), Grantee(s) and/or Other Person(s) Responsible for Collection and Analysis

Statistical Design and Data Collection:

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