

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
NOAA TEACHER-AT-SEA PROGRAM  
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0283**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

This request is for extension of a current information collection.

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

Consistent with the support for research and education under the [National Marine Sanctuaries Act](#) (16 U.S.C. 32 §1440) and other coastal and marine protection legislation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provides educators an opportunity to gain first-hand experience with field research activities through the Teacher-at-Sea Program. Through this program, educators spend up to 3 weeks at sea on a NOAA research vessel, participating in an ongoing research project with NOAA scientists.

The Participant's Application solicits information from interested educators, and participants in the program are selected following review of their application. The application includes two recommendation forms and a NOAA Health Services Questionnaire, the latter being a requirement of anyone going to sea. Once an educator is selected and participates on a cruise, s/he writes a report detailing the events of the cruise and her ideas for classroom activities based on what was learned while at sea. These materials are then made available to other educators so they may benefit from the experience, without actually going to sea themselves. NOAA does not collect information from this universe of respondents for any other purpose.

**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 all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.**

Applications are accepted annually, from October through February, for the purpose of identifying prospective participants in the Teacher-at-Sea Program. The specific items of information on the application will be used in the following manner:

**Name, Home Address, Home Phone, Name of School, School Address, Work Phone, Email Address, Citizenship, and Age Range** are necessary self-identification information for the applicants.

**Gender** information is used to accommodate berthing requirements aboard the ship.

The questions: **What subjects and grades do you currently teach?** and **What subjects and grades are you likely to teach next year?** are used to determine the areas of discipline of the applicant. This information is useful when placing more than one teacher on a ship in order to

match their areas of expertise, when evaluating their classroom activities for their appropriate subject matter and age level, and to determine that an applicant is, in fact, an educator.

The question: **What leadership roles have you held in education?** is used to evaluate the applicants. Applicants are given a higher score for holding leadership roles in their schools, participating in their own professional development, and being a role model for their students. These skills and activities directly relate to a teacher's ability to translate the experience into their classroom.

Question #1, **How will you use this experience to benefit your students and colleagues?** is the most important selection criteria on the application. The information details what plans the teacher has for their follow-up classroom activities, as well as their plans for conducting workshops, in-service training, and writing articles for publication. These are the "products" that NOAA can show to justify the existence of the program.

Question #2, **Describe your experience and ability to write your own classroom activities,** directly relates to an educator's ability to make use of the experience for teachers and students. The more skilled a teacher is at writing curriculum and adapting life experiences to the classroom the better they are at taking an immersive experience, like being at sea, and translating it to classroom lessons.

Question #3, **What type of project would you prefer to join? Explain the parameters that go into your decision,** encourages applicants to consider what type of research they would be most interested in pursuing and why. It also encourages them to consider where they would be most suited and most likely to become meaningfully engaged in the project.

Question #4, **Discuss your ability to adapt to the physical and personal demands of life on-board a ship,** is an attempt to encourage the applicants to consider what life is like on-board a ship. The quarters are small, space is limited, it is difficult to "get away" from other people, communications and medical facilities are limited. All these factors are important considerations to make before one embarks on a three-week cruise in the open ocean. While this information is not used in the rating process, it is important for the applicants to give due consideration to these conditions.

The **recommendations**, one from an Administrator and one from a Colleague, give good insight into an educator's teaching ability and their creativity in the classroom. This is an important evaluation criterion.

The **NOAA Health Services Questionnaire** provides the necessary information for the NOAA Medical Officer to determine whether an applicant is fit for sea duty. Only applicants that have been selected for participation by the TAS program will complete the questionnaire.

The **Follow-up Report** is collected as a completion of the agreement between NOAA and the participating teacher so that NOAA can distribute the materials to non-participating teachers thereby broadening the impact of the program to benefit more teachers.

It is anticipated that the Follow-up Report will be disseminated to the public and used to support publicly disseminated information. NOAA will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Prior to dissemination, the information will be subjected to quality control measures and a pre-dissemination review pursuant to [Section 515 of Public Law 106-554](#).

NOAA does not plan to disseminate the submitted applications to the public.

**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.**

This application is available on the Internet and teachers are able to download the application from the [Teacher-at-Sea Web site](#), complete it on the computer, print and mail. The Health Services Questionnaire can be submitted online. The Teacher-at-Sea Internet URL is widely distributed and communication is often provided through direct email contact between the Program Administrator and the applicants.

**4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.**

There are no other known collections gathering similar information. The Teacher-at-Sea Program is the only NOAA information collection directed at educators.

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

No small businesses will be responding to this collection.

**6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.**

If this information collection were not conducted the opportunity to participate in NOAA research projects would not be open to a broad audience, and very few educators would be able to participate.

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

The collection is conducted in a manner consistent with the OMB guidelines.

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

A Federal Register Notice published on January 25, 2013 (78 FR 5421) solicited public comment on this collection. No comments were received.

The reviewers, consisting of NOAA employees and Teacher-at-Sea alumni, evaluate the application during the selection process for clarity, ease of use and utility. NOAA employees consist of members of the NOAA Education Council, NOAA Education Committee, and various employees from different NOAA Line and Staff Offices with expertise in education. The Teacher at Sea alumni consist of currently employed and former teachers who previously participated in the Teacher-at-Sea Program. Applicants provide comments on the entire application process, including the application itself, during the evaluation of the program following their cruise. Several applicants have been contacted regarding the application to determine the clarity of instructions and the amount of burden imposed.

The application is distributed widely at educators' conferences, through education publications, and at workshops, all of which provide opportunities for further public comment. No major problems have been uncovered as a result of any of these consultations.

*Most recently: On April 15, 2013, TAS held an alumni meeting during which we consulted with 20 meeting participants to obtain their views on burdens associated with the information collection for 0648-0283 TAS application. Individuals concurred with the current estimates.*

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

There are no payments made or gifts given to respondents.

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

As stated on the form, the NOAA Health Services Questionnaire will be protected as a Privacy Act record and treated confidentially. A Privacy Act System of Records Notice is under review at the Department of Commerce.

**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.**

Except for the health questions, there are no questions of a sensitive nature or any matters that are commonly considered private.

**12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.**

The estimates for the burden of the collection of information have been gathered by surveying applicants. There are 375 unduplicated respondents (those for the health questionnaire and the follow-up report are a subset of the applicants). The estimates are as follows:

Application Process

Number of respondents expected annually = 125

Frequency of response = once annually

Average response time per respondent = 1 hour

15 minutes to read the application

30 minutes to complete the application

15 minutes to deliver and discuss the recommendation forms

**Total hours: 125.**

Recommendations (2 per applicant)

Number of respondents expected annually = 250

Frequency of response = once annually

Average response time per respondent = 15 minutes

**Total hours: 62 hours and 30 minutes (63).**

Health Services Questionnaire

Number of respondents expected annually = 45

Frequency of response = once annually

Average response time per respondent = 15 minutes

**Total hours: 11.**

Follow-up report

Number of respondents expected annually = 45

Frequency of response = once annually

Average response time per respondent = 2 hours

1 hour to gather data and materials

1 hour to write report

**Total hours: 90.**

**Totals**

Number of respondents = 375

Total annual responses = 465

**Total hours = 289**

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

The total annual cost burden per response resulting from the collection is:

1 postage stamp = \$0.45

1 envelope = \$0.06

**Total cost (\$0.51 x 465) = \$237.15 (\$237) (rounded up to \$238**

**in ROCIS)**

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

The estimated annual costs to the Federal government are outlined below:

Hours (780 @ \$17.69) = \$13,798.20

Operational expenses (printing) = \$1,500.00

**Total = \$15,298.20**

**15. Explain the reasons for any program changes.**

**Adjustments:**

We made a correction: the health questionnaire is not completed until an applicant is accepted. Since fewer respondents complete the form than was previously shown, there is a reduction of 20 hours, but since the form is not considered part of the application response, responses have gone up by 45.

There are adjustments to the costs: updating postage cost and correcting responses to 465. This adjustment added \$27 to the costs, due to the health services questionnaire being sent separately from the application (although the questionnaire can be submitted online, we are counting postage for all responses).

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

The results of the collection 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.**

The NOAA Health Services Questionnaire is owned by the Office of Marine and Aviation Services and is required for all NOAA staff sailing or flying. It is also a Web-based form. The OMB Control No. and expiration date for the Teacher at Sea Program are not on this form, but are on a separate page that the TAS program adds to the form.

**18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.**

Not Applicable.

**B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS**

This collection does not employ statistical methods.