

## SUPPORTING STATEMENT

OMB CONTROL NO: 0648-0568

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: (1) Office of Education, Educational Partnership Program (EPP), (2) Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program; (3) Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program; and, (4) National Marine Fisheries Service Recruitment, Training, and Research Program

### A. JUSTIFICATION

This request is for revision and extension of a current information collection. The title has been changed from “National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Education, Educational Partnership Program (EPP) and Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program” to “National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: (1) Office of Education, Educational Partnership Program (EPP), (2) Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program; (3) Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program; and, (4) National Marine Fisheries Service Recruitment, Training, and Research Program”.

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

The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is authorized by section 4002 of the America COMPETES Act, Pub. Law 110-69, to establish and administer a Graduate Sciences Program and two undergraduate scholarship programs to enhance understanding of ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and atmospheric science and stewardship by the general public and other coastal stakeholders, including underrepresented groups in ocean and atmospheric science and policy careers. In addition, NOAA’s Administrator is authorized by section 214 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005, [Pub. Law 108-447](#), to establish and administer the Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program to support undergraduate studies in oceanic and atmospheric science, research, technology, and education that support the purposes of the programs and missions of NOAA.

Additions to this collection:

There are two additions to the collection for the voluntary alumni form: Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program and the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service Recruiting, Training, and Research Program.

The Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program is authorized at 16 U.S.C. 1445c-1 and 16 U.S.C. 1445c to recognize outstanding achievement in oceanography, marine biology or maritime archaeology (including all science, engineering, and resource management of ocean and coastal areas) particularly by women and members of minority groups. For more information about the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program, go to <http://fosterscholars.noaa.gov/>.

The 2007 reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act directed that a study be conducted to determine if a shortage exists in the number of individuals with post-baccalaureate degrees who have the ability to conduct high quality scientific research in fishery stock assessment, fishery population dynamics, and related fields for government, non-profit, and private sector entities (P.L. 109-479, sec. 217). In response to the shortage identified by the report, the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (SEFSC) of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) created the Recruiting, Training, and Research (RTR) Program to increase the quality and quantity of stock assessment scientists entering the discipline.

NOAA's Office of Education (OEd) administers scholarship programs and one grant program – the Educational Partnership Program (EPP) Cooperative Science Centers (CSC). The OEd maintains a Student and Performance Measures Tracking System (SPMTS) with student data from all the programs it administers. NOAA OEd staff enters data for the scholarship programs. The EPP CSCs are entering and updating the SPMTS for their students

Student applicant information, including information provided by references, will be collected for the Educational Partnership Program Undergraduate Scholarship Program and the Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship.

In addition, OEd has included the alumni form in this collection, recently revised with OMB approval, but now including two additional sets of alumni, as described below. OEd believes this information is necessary because NOAA desires to know whether the NOAA funded students pursue and complete NOAA-related science degrees, the students are employed by NOAA or a NOAA contractor, or are involved in other programs due to their NOAA-funded education and training.

The Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program (OMB Control No. 0648-0432) and the Recruiting, Training, and Research Program are new collectors for alumni data. As the RTR workshops are run by its host universities (Virginia Tech 2004-2011, University of Florida 2012-Present), previous evaluations have been conducted using university-approved (IRB-approved) evaluation forms. The new alumni form will be used to track the former students over time, specifically related to NOAA objectives.

The revised form will be used by the following four NOAA programs:

1. Office of Education, Educational Partnership Program;
2. Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program;
3. Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program; and,
4. National Marine Fisheries Service Recruitment, Training and Research Program.

2. Explain how, by whom, 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.

Education Programs and Their Purposes

NOAA recognizes outstanding scholarship and encourages independent graduate level research – particularly by female and underrepresented students – in ocean and atmospheric science and policy careers.

The purpose of the OEd Educational Partnership Program (EPP) is to educate, train and graduate students in NOAA-mission sciences. OEd EPP is strongly committed to broadening the participation of [Minority Serving Institutions](#) (MSIs) such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Indian Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities, Alaska Native-Serving Institutions, and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions. NOAA’s OEd EPP/MSI partnership is comprised of four program components:

- The Undergraduate Scholarship Program (USP) provides an opportunity for rising junior and senior students to study disciplines relating to the NOAA's mission. Students attending [MSI](#) (Hispanic Serving Institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Alaskan-Native Serving Institutions, and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions) conduct internships at approved NOAA offices and sites upon acceptance to the program.
- The Graduate Sciences Program (GSP) is aimed primarily at increasing opportunities for students in NOAA-related fields to pursue research and educational training in atmospheric, environmental, remote sensing and oceanic sciences at MSI when possible. The GSP offers between two years (master's candidates) to four years (doctoral students) of NOAA-related research and training opportunities. (CLOSED to new students)
- The Environmental Entrepreneurship Program’s (EEP) provides funding to eligible MSIs on a competitive basis to provide students with training in the application of NOAA sciences in order to foster economic development opportunities. EEP facilitates partnerships among MSIs; various NOAA offices; academic research, government and business organizations that can help prepare students with appropriate knowledge and skills to exploit environmental tools and technological resources. (CLOSED to new students)
- The Cooperative Science Centers’ (CSCs) objectives are to educate and graduate students in NOAA-related sciences, to conduct research in support of NOAA’s mission, and to build capacity within the collaborating institutions. EPP established five Cooperative Science Centers at MSIs to advance collaborative research in the NOAA-related (pertains to NOAA’s mission) sciences. The first four Cooperative Science Centers were established in 2001 and the fifth Center in 2006. The 2011 grant award resulted in four Cooperative Science Centers (the previous ones existed only through their grant durations). The Center Director and Distinguished Scientist at each Center develop and lead key education and research activities.

For more information about the Educational Partnership Program, visit: [www.epp.noaa.gov](http://www.epp.noaa.gov).

The purpose of the Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program is to:

1. Increase undergraduate training in oceanic and atmospheric science, research, technology, and education and foster multidisciplinary training opportunities;
2. Increase public understanding and support for stewardship of the ocean and atmosphere and improve environmental literacy;
3. Recruit and prepare students for public service careers with NOAA and other natural resource and science agencies at the federal, state and local levels of government; and,

4. Recruit and prepare students for careers as teachers and educators in oceanic and atmospheric science and to improve scientific and environmental education in the United States.

For more information about the Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program, visit: <http://www.oesd.noaa.gov/scholarships/hollings.html>.

The purpose of the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program is to support independent graduate level research through financial support of graduate studies in the fields of oceanography, marine biology or maritime archaeology (including all science, engineering, and resource management of ocean and coastal areas). The program seeks to increase the number of women and minorities in these scientific disciplines, particularly as they relate to the mission of the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS).

The purpose of the NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Recruiting, Training, and Research (RTR) Program is to: 1) recruit top quantitative undergraduate students from across the country, 2) station a NMFS stock assessment scientist at a university with a well-respected fisheries program in the southeastern U.S. to perform many of the critical tasks of a faculty member, including teaching graduate courses and supervising graduate students in the discipline, and 3) support additional graduate students in the discipline.

### OEd Student Tracker Database

The OEd Student Tracker Database maintains data for all students receiving funding under the following programs:

- EPP Undergraduate Scholarship Program;
- EPP Graduate Sciences Program;
- EPP Environmental Entrepreneurship Program;
- EPP Cooperative Science Centers; and,
- Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program.

The collection of student data is a program requirement that enables OEd to assess compliance with its performance measures, described below. NOAA's OEd staff maintains this database and updates it and thus no public burden is incurred for this portion of the input to the database. Information on CSC students is entered by CSC program coordinators or principal investigators, as required by a special award condition.

OEd requires that NOAA-funded Cooperative Science Center student data be provided three times per year and is aligned with the trimester system to capture student graduation, transfers, and/or completions of the program that occur during the academic year. The volume of these updates strongly lends itself to this frequency of reporting; it would be unwieldy for the Cooperative Science Center program coordinators to gather and input the data once per year. Also, receiving the information at these intervals allows ongoing tracking of performance measures.

The student alumni form is used to collect follow-up information about the student. NOAA requires knowing whether the NOAA-funded students pursue and complete post-graduate NOAA-related science degrees, are employed by NOAA or a NOAA contractor, etc.

The collected student data is also tabulated to provide the status on progress of all OEd programs' performance measures.

### Performance Measures

#### Graduate Sciences Program

- Number of graduate sciences program students hired in NOAA Line Offices.

#### Undergraduate Scholarship Program

- Number of undergraduate scholarship students attending MSIs who are trained and graduate in NOAA-related sciences;
- Number of undergraduate scholarship students attending MSIs who pursue graduate work in NOAA-related sciences; and,
- Number of undergraduate scholarship students attending MSIs who are hired by NOAA, NOAA Contractors and other natural resources and science agencies at the Federal, State, local and tribal levels.

#### Ernest Hollings Scholarship Program

- Number of Hollings scholarship students who are trained in NOAA-related sciences, research technology, and education;
- Number of Hollings scholarship students who are hired by NOAA and other natural resource and science agencies at the Federal, State, and local levels;
- The number of students from the Hollings Program who teach and become educators in NOAA-related sciences; and,
- The number of Hollings students who pursue graduate work in NOAA-related sciences.

#### Environmental Entrepreneurship Program

Number of students who receive training and experiential learning opportunities in NOAA-related environmental business enterprises.

#### Cooperative Science Centers

- Number of students from underrepresented communities who are trained and graduate in NOAA-mission sciences annually;
- Number of students who are trained and graduate in NOAA-mission sciences annually;
- Number of students completing experiential opportunities at NOAA facilities;
- Number of EPP funded students who are hired by NOAA, NOAA contractors and other environmental, natural resource, and science agencies at the Federal, State, local and tribal levels, in academia and the private sector;
- Number of collaborative research projects undertaken between NOAA and MSI partners in support of NOAA operations;
- Number of students and faculty who participate in and complete postdoctoral level research programs in support of the NOAA mission;
- Number of peer reviewed papers published in NOAA-mission sciences by scientists (faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and students) sponsored by NOAA EPP;
- Funds leveraged with NOAA EPP funds (including student support) ; and,
- Number of outreach participants engaged in NOAA mission relevant learning opportunities.

For the CSCs, the allocated funds are tracked. Thirty (30) percent of CSC funding is mandated for direct student support. The 30% direct student support is mandated for the CSC lead institution and all partner institutions. Annually, 30% of the direct cost must support students. The scholarships / stipends are to support: tuition; stipends for housing; books and laboratory fees; conference or workshop or forum registration; transportation and lodging to NOAA programs and facilities, scientific conferences, meetings and workshops; and, professional development including mentoring training, or course costs. Items such as t-shirts, backpacks, water bottles, laboratory supplies and equipment are not considered direct student support.

To measure the impact of OEd programs, the data collected are compared to the available data in the national education databases (e.g., National Science Foundation and National Center for Education Statistics) and NOAA workforce management database. Furthermore, the student data collection identifies degree pipeline areas (BS, MS, or PhD) and where OEd and its academic partners may target recruitment for its' NOAA-related science educational and training programs. NOAA scholarship programs produce a pool of qualified candidates that may be hired by NOAA and help to sustain a world-class NOAA organization.

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The collected student data is also tabulated to provide the status on progress of all programs' performance measures.

Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program Performance Measure

- Number of Postsecondary Students in Higher Education Programs

Performance measures for the RTR Program include the percentage of participants who end up working for NOAA and the percentage of participants who enter National Science Foundation (NSF) Field of Study #055 (Fishing & Fisheries Sciences/Management).

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.

### 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.

The collection of information will primarily entail web-based forms with electronic fillable forms (e.g., PDF forms) as a back-up. Applicants and grant recipients will complete the web-based forms that will automatically be transferred to a database. In the event that the web-based method is not functional, the applicants and grant recipients may complete fillable forms that may be sent electronically or mailed.

4. Describe the efforts to identify duplication.

Cooperative Science Center student data and information are unique to the program component in that they are not collected by any other entity. The NOAA scholarship applications are unique in that the applications require responses to NOAA-related questions. The common alumni form is a form that will be used by programs: (1) Office of Education Educational Partnership Program; (2) Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program; (3) Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program; and, (4) Recruiting, Training, and Research (RTR) Program.

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

Not applicable.

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, the data will not be available to support program performance assessments and NOAA program reports.

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

Not applicable.

8. Provide a copy of 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 was published on Thursday, August 8, 2013 (78 FR 48417). No public comments were received on the proposed information collection.

Comments solicited through other venues:

**Student and Performance Measures Tracking System (SPMETS)**

NOAA's Office of Education held two webinars with the grantee institutions that report three times per year using the SPMETS. The first webinar was held at the end of January 15, 2013 to introduce the re-vamped system (data collection system) to the grantee institutions. SPMETS instructions were made available to all users.

The second webinar was held at the end of August 27, 2013 to ask for feedback on the grantee institutions use of the system. When the webinar was announced, NOAA Office of Education (OEd) received email feedback from one of the grant recipients. During the webinar, OEd

received additional comments on the SPMTS. NOAA's Office of Education is addressing all the feedback. Most of the recommendations have been implemented. The SPMTS instructions were also updated.

Samples of recommendations for improvement and the response:

The three recommendations that were received during the SPMTS Webinar were discussed within program. Two (one and three) of the three recommendations will be implemented. The second recommendation will be held so that additional data may be collected and the recommendation revisited. Please see the list of recommendations below.

1. Academic - Yes, will be implemented

Recommend allowing the user to add new academic research advisor names.

2. Academic - Funding - Hold

Recommend allowing the user to delete mistakes such as incorrect funding entries.

3. Reporting - Funding - Yes, will be implemented

Recommend adding a degree column to the funding report.

#### **Cooperative Science Center Student Data**

In September 2013 the four Cooperative Science Centers were asked to provide the time it takes to submit data entries to the SPMTS. The Cooperative Science Centers had a deadline of September 30, 2013 to submit the data entries for students supported during the summer. NOAA's Office of Education received feedback from two of the four Cooperative Science Centers and the average time to enter the data was twenty-eight (28) hours. NOAA's Office of Education has revised our response time estimate accordingly.

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

Not applicable.

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

There is no statutory authority for confidentiality. However, only promotional information (student names, research projects, and photographs) are made public on the program website, newsletter articles, and in press releases. All other information is available primarily to program staff.

As needed, student information may be disclosed to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Civil Rights and the Workforce Management Office to assist the Office of Education in completing and maintaining the student tracker records. The justification for sharing information on a need to know basis within the agency is provided explicitly within the statutory language of the Privacy Act. See 5 U.S.C. 552a(b)(1).

The physical electronic OEd files are protected from access outside of NOAA and outside of



Office of Education by a system of firewalls and routers. Whenever feasible, applications are hosted within the internally protected network to limit access by NOAA personnel only. Restricted access is employed so that only authorized users within the NOAA Office of Education scholarship team have access to the scholarship files.

The OEd student scholarship programs' paper application is destroyed after the evaluation and selection of NOAA student scholars. The student name, street address, telephone number and email address are maintained electronically in a secured location on the NOAA server, as is the student tracker database. Access to the electronic files on the OEd shared drive requires username/password combinations to retrieve the information.

A Privacy Impact Assessment was approved April 7, 2009 by the Department of Commerce and is in process of update. The primary means of file retrieval is not by a personal identifier, and thus this is not a system of records as defined by the Privacy Act.

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 student and performance measures tracking system web-form is required three times per year from four (4) NOAA Educational Partnership Program Cooperative Science Center grant recipients. Therefore, EPP expects 12 student tracker database forms annually. The completion of the student tracker database form by each program coordinator, containing information on all students within his/her grant program, is expected to take a maximum of 28 hours to enter data for an average of 200 students and performance measures. In other words, each time a program coordinator completes the student and performance measures report, the report includes updated information on approximately 200 students and 16 performance measures. A report is considered one response (including information on 200 students and 16 performance measures). There are 4 program coordinators; thus, with 3 reports per year per program coordinator, total reports/responses are 12. Each report takes 28 hours; thus, 12 x 28 hours makes a total burden for this information collection, annually, of 336 hours.

Based on a two-year history of applications, OEd expects to receive 800 undergraduate scholarship programs (USP and Hollings) application. Subject to the appropriated and earmarked funds, approximately 15 and 100 students are selected annually for the USP and Hollings scholarship program, respectively. Completion of the undergraduate scholarship programs application is estimated to take 8 hours. Based on 800 applications, OEd calculates 1,600 reference forms, two references per application. Completion of the undergraduate scholarship programs reference form is estimated to take 1 hour. Burden: 6,400 hours for applications and 1,600 hours for references.

It is estimated that 1,177 Alumni Update Forms will be received from four programs. Completion of the alumni form is estimated to take 1 hour, for a total of 1,177 hours. The alumni form will be used by the following four NOAA programs:

1. Office of Education, Educational Partnership Program (191 forms);
2. Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program (796 forms);
3. Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program (40 forms); and,
4. National Marine Fisheries Service Recruitment, Training and Research Program (150 forms).

The total hours of burden of 9,513 hours is provided in the chart provided on the following page. The \$162,270 figure represents labor dollars required to complete the electronic forms.

Table 1: Respondent, Burden, Cost Chart

Requirement	# of Respondents	# of Responses per Respondent	Total # of Responses	Response Time (hours)	Total Burden (hours)	Labor Rate per hour (\$)	Labor Cost to Public per Burden Hour
Student and Performance Measures Tracking System Form	4	3	12	28	336	35	11,760
Undergraduate Scholarship Program Application	800	1	800	8	6,400	8	51,200
Undergraduate Scholarship Program Reference Form	1,600	1	1,600	1	1,600	40	64,000
Alumni Update Form for Student Scholarship Programs	1,177	1	1,177	1	1,177	30	35,310
<b>TOTAL REQUESTED</b>	<b>3,581</b>		<b>3,589</b>		<b>9,513</b>		<b>\$162,270</b>

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual recordkeeping/reporting cost burden to the respondents resulting from the collection (excluding the valued of the burden hours in Question 12 above).

Based on a two-year average of applications, OEd expects to receive 30 mailed undergraduate and graduate scholarship program applications annually. It is estimated that it will cost each applicant a maximum of \$20 for photocopying and mailing of the application packages (if Fedex is used), with a total possible cost of \$600.

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

Total annualized cost is \$40,800. The figure represents salary dollars needed to process the collected data (460 hours @\$80.00 per hour = \$36,800) and \$4,000 printing costs. The 460 hours is based on the following:

- 100 hours to process, verify and validate, the student data from the CSC;
- 160 hours to process the Hollings student applications and reference forms;
- 80 hours to process the USP student applications and reference forms; and,
- 120 hours to process the Voluntary Alumni Update Sheet form.

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

The Environmental Entrepreneurship Program and one Cooperative Science Center grant awards are closed and no new student data will be collected. Two new NOAA programs will collect alumni data and information: the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program and Recruiting, Training, and Research (RTR) Program, in addition to the Educational Partnership Program and the Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program.

Adjustment

SMPTS Form: There has been a decrease of 8 respondents and 24 responses, from 12 to 4 and 36 responses to 12, but in the last ICR, only 12 responses, and 194 hours, were included in ROCIS. Therefore this change will not appear in the system. Twelve responses are now correct (4 x 3), but due to the adjusted response time, the new hours have changed from 194 to 336, showing an increase of 142 hours.

Total mailing costs were previously estimated at an average of \$300 per year, but we are now using the maximum cost of \$600.

Program changes: Closure of two programs and addition of two programs' use of the alumni form.

GSP – Application Form: Decrease of 40 responses, from 40 to 0 and from 320 hours to 0

GSP - Reference Form: Decrease of 120 responses, from 120 to 0, and from 120 hours to 0

USP – Application Form: Decrease of 200 responses from 1,000 to 800 and from 8,000 hours to 6,400

USP – Reference Form: Decrease of 400 responses, from 2,000 to 1,600 and same decrease for hours

Alumni Form: Increase of 865 responses, from 312 to 1,177 and same increase for hours.

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

The EPP and Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship Program student data – student name, research project and photographs – are posted on NOAA’s Office of Education web site, included in EPP newsletter articles, and submitted for press releases. The number of NOAA OEd supported students (by NOAA-scientific or technological discipline and program component) is included in Government program reports, used for program evaluation and analysis, and used for outreach and promotional purposes.

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.

18. Explain each exception the certification statement.

Not applicable.