

## **SUPPORTING STATEMENT FOR PAPERWORK REDUCTION SUBMISSION**

### **Customer Satisfaction Survey: PI Response Mechanism Process**

#### **A. JUSTIFICATION**

##### **1. CIRCUMSTANCES MAKING COLLECTION OF INFORMATION NECESSARY**

On September 11, 1993, President Clinton issued Executive Order 12862, “Setting Customer Service Standards,” which clearly defined his vision that the Federal agencies will put the public first. To accomplish this, President Clinton called for a “revolution within the Federal government to change the way it does business.” He expected this process to require continual reform of government practices and operations to the end that, “when dealing with the Federal agencies, all people receive service that matches or exceeds the best service available in the private sector.”

Section 1(b) of this E.O. requires agencies to “survey customers to determine the kind and quality of services they want and their level of satisfaction with existing services” and Section 1(a) requires agencies to “survey front-line employees on barriers to, and ideas for, matching the best in business.” These Presidential requirements established an ongoing need for the National Science Foundation (NSF) to engage in an interactive process of collecting information and using it to improve program services and processes.

In 2016, NSF will conduct a limited pilot of a modified review process that includes an opportunity for grant applicants to respond to the initial reviews provided by peer reviewers. Reviewers will consider these responses before making their final recommendations. The

survey seeks to document the experience of NSF's grant applicants and determine whether the pilot review process has potential to improve the quality of NSF's merit review system.

**2. HOW, BY WHOM, AND PURPOSE FOR WHICH INFORMATION IS TO BE USED**

The survey will request voluntary feedback from NSF grant applicants (researchers). The survey will be sent to researchers who have submitted proposals to the program Algorithms in the Field. NSF anticipates 100 to 150 submissions to this program in Fiscal Year 2016. The data will be used to understand the whether applicants' feel that the pilot process improves overall merit review quality. This data will ultimately inform NSF's decision on whether to adopt the process more broadly.

**3. USE OF AUTOMATION**

The survey will be administered by NSF staff via the Foundation's SurveyMonkey account. Via the SurveyMonkey tool, the individuals from the research community, described above, will receive an email with a link to complete the survey. Participation in the survey is voluntary.

**4. EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY DUPLICATION**

Not Applicable.

**5. SMALL BUSINESS CONSIDERATIONS**

Not applicable.

**6. CONSEQUENCES OF LESS FREQUENT COLLECTION**

Not applicable.

**7. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR COLLECTION**

Not applicable.

**8. FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE.**

The agency's notices, as required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), were published in the *Federal Register* on February 25, 2014, at 79 FR 10574 and May 30, 2014 at 79 FR 31145 and no comments were received.

## **9. OUTSIDE CONSULTATION**

NSF estimates that this survey will take less than 10 minutes to complete. This estimate is based upon the modest length of the survey and the expectation that the applicants, who have a strong interest in the review process, will already have considered the questions and will find it easy to respond.

## **10. GIFTS OR REMUNERATION**

Not applicable.

## **11. CONFIDENTIALITY PROVIDED TO RESPONDENTS**

Yes, a confidentiality assurance is provided in the initial survey message: "Please be assured that your answers will remain anonymous and reported in aggregate form only."

## **12. QUESTIONS OF A SENSITIVE NATURE**

No questions of a sensitive nature will be asked.

## **13. ESTIMATE OF BURDEN**

Each respondent will submit only one survey response. It is anticipated that the average response time for a respondent will be 10 minutes or less. This estimate is based on the survey length and time required to complete similarly long surveys in the past. NSF anticipates that the number of responses to the survey will be approximately 100. The total hourly burden for the researchers is estimated to be 17 hours (100 respondents x 10 minutes / 60 minutes).

## **ANNUALIZED COST TO RESPONDENTS**

Tenure-track professors will be the predominant respondent group to the survey. The 2013-2014 American Association of University Professor’s Faculty Salary Survey reports in Survey Report Table 4 the Average Salary and Average compensation by Category, Affiliation, and Academic Rank. The average salary at the Associate Professor rank across all categories (e.g. doctoral, masters, baccalaureate, associate’s) of \$90,839 is used as an estimate for NSF researchers.

**Cost to Respondents (Researchers)**

Average salary of faculty (researchers) as described above	\$90,839
Hourly salary based on 1,920 annual hours (40 hours per week for 48 weeks)	\$47.31
Estimate of survey burden (researchers)	17 hours
<b>Cost to Respondents</b>	<b>\$804</b>

In total, the burden cost to the survey respondent population is estimated at \$804.

**14. CAPITAL/STARTUP COSTS**

Not applicable.

**15. ANNUALIZED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

Hourly salary of federal government employee (GS-13-9)	\$54.58
Hours, federal government employee review and oversight	10
Cost of federal government employee review and oversight	\$546
<b>Cost to the Federal Government</b>	<b>\$546</b>

**16. CHANGES IN BURDEN**

Not applicable.

**17. PUBLICATION OF COLLECTION**

Not applicable.

**18. SEEKING APPROVAL TO NOT DISPLAY OMB EXPIRATION DATE**

Not applicable.

**19. EXCEPTION(S) TO THE CERTIFICATION STATEMENT (19) ON OMB 83-I**

There are no exceptions.

**B. STATISTICAL METHODS**

**B.1. Universe and Sampling Procedures**

Most respondents will be researchers/professors from research universities, though the group also may include researchers from less traditional grant-seeking organizations, such as small for-profit businesses and informal science learning organizations like museums. The survey will be sent to all applicants whose proposals are reviewed using the pilot process; there is no random sampling planned.

**B.2. Survey Methodology**

The survey will be web-based. NSF will send the survey link out via SurveyMonkey.

**B.3. Methods to Maximize Response**

NSF seeks to maximize feedback from prospective respondents. Questions have been vetted internally at NSF with survey methodologists for clarity. As part of the survey launch, NSF will send an introductory email and survey link to all potential respondents. To maximize response, NSF will subsequently follow-up with potential respondents via email to encourage participation.

#### **B.4. Testing of Procedures**

This time estimate for survey completion is based on the survey length and time required to complete similar surveys in the past.

#### **B.5. Contacts for Statistical Aspects of Data Collection**

Erika Rissi, NSF Staff Associate, serves as the point-of-contact for data collection and analysis.