

**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
DR. NANCY FOSTER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM  
OMB CONTROL NO. 0648-0432**

**A. JUSTIFICATION**

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

This request is for revision and extension of a current information collection, with minor changes made to the post-evaluation form that include requests for performance measurements (outputs and outcomes).

An amendment adding Section 18 of the [National Marine Sanctuaries Act](#) authorized the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program in 2000. The program supports these Office of National Marine Sanctuaries performance measures:

- Knowledge/Awareness Ocean Literacy
- Knowledge/Awareness Office of the National Marine Sanctuaries (ONMS)
- Aspirations of Conservation/Stewardship
- Behaviors/activities

The program recognizes outstanding scholarship by providing financial support to graduate students pursuing masters' and doctoral degrees in the areas of marine biology, oceanography and maritime archaeology.

In order to select qualified students, it is necessary to collect an Application Package from each candidate that consists of: 1) a General Information Sheet, 2) Statement of Intent, 3) Institute Certification, 4) Research Proposal, 5) Statement of Financial Need, 6) Declaration Statement, 7) academic transcripts and 8) two Letters of Recommendation from individuals who have knowledge of the student's academic record, research effort, work (paid or unpaid work, such as internships and volunteer efforts) and/or life experience. One of these letters must be from the academic advisor.

The information will be used to select those individuals who will receive Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarships. In order to properly process and monitor awardees, scholarship recipients will be required to submit an Annual Report and provide a biography and photograph of themselves for the website. Scholarship recipients will also be requested to complete an evaluation before and after the scholarship program to gather information about the level of knowledge, skills and behavioral changes that take place with the students over the course of the scholarship.

**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.**

The Application Package information is collected annually during the application period. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of National Marine

Sanctuaries (ONMS) program administrator will conduct this information collection each year, and scholarship review panelists and ONMS leadership will use the information to select scholarship recipients. The student data and information is collected, evaluated and assessed, archived, and reported. Aggregated data is used in NOAA internal reports and reports in response to Congressional queries.

A biographical (bio) sketch and a photograph will be required once of each new awardee prior to their receiving their first allotment of scholarship funds. The bios and photographs will be posted on the scholarship website so interested individuals can see and learn more about those who were selected as awardees. A Progress Report will be required annually of all continuing awardees (in March/April); this Progress Report will outline awardees' accomplishments and academic progress and enable administrators to track awardees' efforts.

The ONMS is institutionalizing a program-wide evaluation plan to ensure that all education programs are being assessed for effectiveness against stated program goals and objectives. Therefore all education programs must be currently evaluated or have an evaluation plan in place. The scholarship awardees will be asked to complete a survey to evaluate the Nancy Foster Scholarship program. The questions will be used to gather information about the level of knowledge, skills and behavioral changes that take place with the students before and after the scholarship program. These questions focus on ocean literacy concepts and awareness of national marine sanctuaries. A five point scale is used with these questions and is based on current reviewed literature on assessing impact and a recognized method of capturing this data. This survey is revised from the previously approved evaluation form.

### **Annual Report**

1. The Annual Report submission will take place through the NOAA Grants-On-Line system.
2. Section added to collect current contact information.
3. Section added to identify publications authored by the recipient.
4. Students must include receipts as part of the annual report.
5. Students must include evidence of enrollment, current grades and a statement of good academic standing from the professor.

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 submitted through the [Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship site](#) and transferred to a database (detailed information and forms are at this site (full instructions are at [grants.gov](#)). In the event that the Web-based method is not functional, the applicants and recipients may complete electronic fillable forms that may be e-mailed. Only transcripts and other documents in support of applications will be submitted by mail.

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

These information collections are related specifically to the Dr. Nancy Foster Scholarship Program, and are the only ones so designated.

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

Not applicable. This collection does not involve small businesses or other small entities.

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

Consequences could include scholarship funds not being awarded and students not receiving financial support; scholarships being awarded less frequently than possible, or on a timeframe that is not in sync with the academic year; the scholarship administrator not being able to effectively track recipient progress; awardees not receiving their funding on time; and the scholarship administrator not being able to market the program effectively. In addition, recruitment and retention will be affected by not collecting the student data and information.

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

Not applicable.

**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 May 22, 2014 (79 FR 29430) solicited public comments. There were no comments received.

Comments from three Nancy Foster Scholars:

1.
  - a) The information we (Foster Scholars) report to our program officers is practical and necessary to document our success in the program.
  - b) The estimate of the burden is accurate
  - c) Our handbook makes it very clear what documents need to be turned in and when.
  - d) Ways to minimize the burden of collection would be to make the Grants.gov website more user friendly. Figuring out where/how to submit the files on the Grants.gov website is the most time-consuming process.

Response: We will pass your comment on to Grants.gov.

2. It says that 1% of the reference forms must be mailed. I assume this is the letters of recommendation? I think these can be sent electronically, emailed directly from the recommender. Everything else looks good!

Response: The postage is for supporting documents.

3. I have no comments.

**9. Explain any decision to provide payments or gifts to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.**

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) is made public on the program website, in newsletter articles, and in press releases. All other information is available primarily to program staff. Protection of other information is assured on the program evaluation and progress report forms.

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](#).

The physical electronic 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 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. Access to the electronic files on the ONMS shared drive requires username/password combinations to retrieve the information.

**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.**

All applicants are required to submit an Application Package. Based upon a 3-year average of applications, we expect to receive 600 responses annually, for 200 applicants, consisting of one application from each applicant and two letters of recommendation for each applicant.

It is estimated that an average of 3 awardees will be selected each year, each of whom will submit a biography and photograph (6 responses) and an Annual Progress Report (6 responses). Each new awardee would complete an evaluation, and at the end of the period, another one, but only one per year (6 responses).

200 application package respondents x 8 hours = 1600 hours

400 letters of recommendation x 45 minutes = 300 hours

6 bio/photograph submissions x 1 hour = 6 hours

6 annual reports\* x 1.5 hours = 9 hours

6 evaluations\* (pre- or post – only one in any given year) x 15 minute = 90 minutes

**Total responses = 618; total hours of burden = 1,916.5 (1,917).**

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

All information other than transcripts and other documents required in support of the applications may be e-mailed or posted on the program Web site. Ordering and postage costs for transcripts and other supporting document submission are estimated at \$20 each, for a total of \$4,000.

\*No increase in estimated response time due to the changes described in Question 2.

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

**The total estimated annual cost is \$93,510.** This figure represents salary dollars needed to oversee administration of the program (416 hours @ \$36 per hour = \$15,000), contract administration for scholarship fund disbursement (\$60,000), salary dollars for application review by panel members (300 hours @ \$50 per hour = \$15,000), cost of materials (\$3,000), and salary dollars for maintenance of the scholarship Website (10 hours @ \$51 per hour = \$510).

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

Based on recent years, fewer awards are expected per year (2-4 rather than 4-7), so respondents, responses, hours and costs are slightly reduced.

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

The names, academic institutions, degree and research plans, photographs, and biographical information of the scholarship awardees will be posted on NOAA's Dr. Nancy Foster website and may be published in marketing materials developed to advertise the program.

**17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be appropriate.**

Not applicable.

**18. Explain each exception to the certificate.**

Not applicable.

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

This collection does not employ statistical methods.