

# **HHS Region VI Virtual Tabletop Exercise Assessment Documents**

OSTLTS Generic Information Collection Request  
OMB No. 0920-0879

## **Supporting Statement – Section A**

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- The goal of the study is to gain participant feedback from the Region VI Pandemic Influenza (PanFlu) Virtual Tabletop Exercise (VTTX) to be held on September 8, 2016. This feedback aims to improve and enhance future planned VTTXs.
- The information collected will be used to provide insight the findings of the exercise and to provide feedback on the exercise.
- All participants in the exercise will be asked to participate in the feedback and findings
- Respondents will be exercise participants, planners, and facilitators from the HHS Region VI VTTX on Sept. 8th 2016. Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and New Mexico are the states participating in the exercises.
- Data from the web-based instrument will be compiled, coded for themes and organized for presentation at the HHS Region VI VTTX Follow-up meeting.

## Section A – Justification

### 1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

This information collection is being conducted using the Generic Information Collection mechanism of the OSTLTS OMB Clearance Center (O2C2) – OMB No. 0920-0879. The respondent universe for this information collection aligns with that of the O2C2. Data will be collected from 140 exercise participants, planners, and facilitators across state, local, tribal, and territorial health departments acting in their official capacities. Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and New Mexico are the states participating in the exercises. Each state invites key stakeholders within their state to participate in the exercise. As there is always some fluidity as to who actually attends on the day of an exercise, the CDC does not collect demographic information from participants until during the exercise. Exercise facilitators and planners are state health department officials.

This information collection is authorized by Section 301 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 241). This information collection falls under the essential public health service(s) of:

- 1. Monitoring health status to identify community health problems
- 2. Diagnosing and investigating health problems and health hazards in the community
- 3. Informing, educating, and empowering people about health issues
- 4. Mobilizing community partnerships to identify and solve health problems
- 5. Development of policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts
- 6. Enforcement of laws and regulations that protect health and ensure safety
- 7. Linking people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable
- 8. Assuring a competent public health and personal health care workforce
- 9. Evaluating effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services
- 10. Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems <sup>1</sup>

The Region VI Pandemic Influenza (PanFlu) Virtual Tabletop Exercise (VTTX) on September 8, 2016 from 12pm - 4pm EDT is hosted by CDC with virtual capability using the ZOOM platform. This VTTX was designed by CDC Public Health Preparedness and Response (PHPR) Division of State and Local Readiness (DSLRL) and the Division of Emergency Operations (DEO) with assistance from the Region VI Exercise Planning Team (EPT) comprised of individuals from each state. It is scheduled for four hours and will focus on the coordination and communication activities associated with a pandemic influenza scenario within Region VI.

This VTTX will be part of a series of CDC-led VTTXs focused on enhancing CDC technical assistance on MCM capabilities. A key feature of these VTTXs is the use of the Zoom platform to bring together a geographically dispersed group of participants. The CDC plans to design a targeted VTTX to address the needs of each region on a rotating basis, with the goal of conducting 3 exercises a year. The information collection is necessary to assess and refine this new series of VTTXs. The purpose of the study is to gain participant feedback from the Region VI Pandemic Influenza (PanFlu) Virtual Tabletop Exercise (VTTX) to be held on September 8-10, 2016. This feedback aims to improve and enhance future planned VTTXs.

### **Overview of the Information Collection System**

The information collection system consists of two emailed assessments.

The Exercise Findings Form (**Attachment A**) gathers the top strengths and areas needing improvement from each state following the exercise. Attachment B can be completed electronically and emailed back to the CDC.

The Exercise Participant Feedback Form (**Attachment B**) is designed to be distributed to participants for their individual feedback on the exercise. Attachment B is intended to be printed by the exercise planners / facilitators and completed by all exercise participants on paper. Then scanned copies are to be electronically returned to the CDC via email.

These methods were chosen to reduce the overall burden on respondents. The information collection instrument was piloted by 6 public health professionals. Feedback from this group was used to refine questions as needed, ensure accurate programming and skip patterns and establish the estimated time required to complete the information collection instrument.

### **Items of Information to be Collected**

The Exercise Participant Feedback form consists of 7 main questions of various types, including dichotomous (yes/no), multiple response, interval (rating scales), and open-ended. An effort was made to limit questions requiring narrative responses from respondents whenever possible. The instrument will collect information on the following:

- Exercise planning and conduct
- Participant demographics

- Participant preparation for the exercise
- Recommended changes to the exercise program

The Exercise Findings form consists of 2 main questions of various types, including open-ended. An effort was made to limit questions requiring narrative responses from respondents whenever possible. The instrument will collect information on the following:

- Strengths
- Areas for Improvements

## **2. Purpose and Use of the Information Collection**

The purpose of the study is to gain participant feedback from the Region VI Pandemic Influenza (PanFlu) Virtual Tabletop Exercise (VTTX) to be held on September 8-10, 2016. This feedback aims to improve and enhance future planned VTTXs.

The information collected will be used to provide insight the findings of the exercise and to provide feedback on the exercise.

## **3. Use of Improved Information Technology and Burden Reduction**

Data will be collected via emailed assessments. The Exercise Findings Form can be completed electronically and emailed back to the CDC. The Exercise Feedback Form is intended to be printed by the exercise planners / facilitators and completed by all exercise participants on paper. Then scanned copies are to be electronically returned to the CDC via email. These methods were chosen to reduce the overall burden on respondents. The information collection instruments were designed to collect the minimum information necessary for the purposes of this project (i.e., limited to 2 or 7 questions).

## **4. Efforts to Identify Duplication and Use of Similar Information**

Each VTTX is a unique event, occurring once in time with a specific set of participants. Any data collected during or about a VTTX is inherently unique due to the nature of the event.

## **5. Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities**

No small businesses will be involved in this information collection.

## **6. Consequences of Collecting the Information Less Frequently**

This request is for a one time information collection. There are no legal obstacles to reduce the burden. If no data are collected, CDC will be unable to:

- Improve the planning of future VTTXs

- Assess the impact of a VTTX

**7. Special Circumstances Relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5**

There are no special circumstances with this information collection package. This request fully complies with the regulation 5 CFR 1320.5 and will be voluntary.

**8. Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice and Efforts to Consult Outside the Agency**

This information collection is being conducted using the Generic Information Collection mechanism of the OSTLTS OMB Clearance Center (O2C2) – OMB No. 0920-0879. A 60-day Federal Register Notice was published in the Federal Register on October 31, 2013, Vol. 78, No. 211; pp. 653 25-26. No comments were received.

CDC partners with professional STLT organizations, such as the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), and the National Association of Local Boards of Health (NALBOH) along with the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) to ensure that the collection requests under individual ICs are not in conflict with collections they have or will have in the field within the same timeframe.

**9. Explanation of Any Payment or Gift to Respondents**

CDC will not provide payments or gifts to respondents.

**10. Protection of the Privacy and Confidentiality of Information Provided by Respondents**

The Privacy Act does not apply to this information collection. STLT governmental staff and / or delegates will be speaking from their official roles.

This information collection is not research involving human subjects.

**11. Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Justification for Sensitive Questions**

No information will be collected that are of personal or sensitive nature.

**12. Estimates of Annualized Burden Hours and Costs**

The estimate for burden hours is based on a pilot of the information collection instruments by 6 public health professionals. The estimated time to complete the instruments is 10 minutes for the Exercise Participant Feedback form and 120 minutes for the Exercise Feedback form based on pilot testing.

Estimates for the average hourly wage for respondents are based on the Department of Labor (DOL) Bureau of Labor Statistics for occupational employment for Emergency Management Directors [http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_nat.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm). Based on DOL data, an average hourly wage of \$35.46 is estimated for all 140 respondents. Table A-12 shows estimated burden and cost information.

**Table A-12:** Estimated Annualized Burden Hours and Costs to Respondents

Information collection Instrument: Form Name	Type of Respondent	No. of Respondents	No. of Responses per Respondent	Average Burden per Response (in hours)	Total Burden Hours	Hourly Wage Rate	Total Respondent Costs
Exercise Participant Feedback Form	Exercise Participants	130	1	10/60	22	\$35.46	\$780
Exercise Findings Form	Exercise Planners and Facilitators	10	1	120/60	20	\$35.46	\$709
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>140</b>			<b>42</b>		<b>\$1489</b>

**13. Estimates of Other Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents or Record Keepers**

There will be no direct costs to the respondents other than their time to participate in each information collection.

**14. Annualized Cost to the Government**

There are no equipment or overhead costs. The only cost to the federal government would be the salary of CDC staff and contractors. The total estimated cost to the federal government is \$700. Table A-14 describes how this cost estimate was calculated.

**Table A-14:** Estimated Annualized Cost to the Federal Government

Staff (FTE)	Average Hours per Collection	Average Hourly Rate	Average Cost
Training Specialist (GS-12) – Development of Instrument, Collection of Data, Data Analysis, Report Development	20	\$35	\$700
Public Health Advisor (GS-13) –	10	\$50	500



Development of Instrument			
<b>Estimated Total Cost of Information Collection</b>			<b>\$1200</b>

**15. Explanation for Program Changes or Adjustments**

This is a new information collection.

**16. Plans for Tabulation and Publication and Project Time Schedule**

The Exercise Feedback Form data will be used by CDC to improve future Virtual Tabletop Exercises and the overall program. Data from the Exercise Findings Form will be included in a summary report that the CDC will draft and share within the CDC’s Division of State and Local Readiness and amongst the states that participated in the exercise. This will be used to enhance DSLR’s future guidance and technical assistance to states.

Project Time Schedule

- ✓ Design questionnaire ..... (COMPLETE)
- ✓ Develop protocol, instructions, and analysis plan ..... (COMPLETE)
- ✓ Pilot test questionnaire ..... (COMPLETE)
- ✓ Prepare OMB package ..... (COMPLETE)
- ✓ Submit OMB package ..... (COMPLETE)
- OMB approval ..... (TBD)
- Conduct assessment ..... (9/8/2016)
- Code, quality control, and analyze data..... (9/15 to 9/28/2016)
- Prepare reports ..... (Oct 2016)
- Disseminate results/reports ..... (Nov 2016)

**17. Reason(s) Display of OMB Expiration Date is Inappropriate**

We are requesting no exemption.

**18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions**

There are no exceptions to the certification. These activities comply with the requirements in 5 CFR 1320.9.

**LIST OF ATTACHMENTS – Section A**

- A. Exercise Findings Form
- B. Exercise Participant Feedback Form

## REFERENCE LIST

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). "National Public Health Performance Standards Program (NPHPSP): 10 Essential Public Health Services." Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nphpsp/essentialservices.html>. Accessed on 8/14/14.