

National Institute of Food and Agriculture
1U.S. Department of Agriculture
OMB# 0524-0036
Reporting Requirements for the Revision of State Plans of Work for
Agricultural Research and Extension Formula Funds

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. CIRCUMSTANCES MAKING COLLECTION OF INFORMATION NECESSARY

The purpose of this collection of information is to continue implementing the requirements of sections 202 and 225 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) which require that a Plan of Work must be submitted by each institution and approved by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) before formula funds may be provided to the 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions. The formula funds are authorized under the Hatch Act for agricultural research activities at the 1862 land-grant institutions, under the Smith-Lever Act for the extension activities at the 1862 land-grant institutions, and under sections 1444 and 1445 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 for research and extension activities at the 1890 land-grant institutions. The Plan of Work must address critical agricultural issues in the State and describe the programs and projects targeted to address these issues using the NIFA formula funds. The Plan of Work also must describe the institution's multistate activities as well as their integrated research and extension activities. This information collection continues the Revised Guidelines for State Plans of Work for the Agricultural Research and Extension Formula Funds as published in the *Federal Register* on January 25, 2006 (71 FR 4101).

This collection of information also includes the reporting requirements of section 102(c) of AREERA for the 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions. This section requires the 1862, 1890, and 1994 land-grant institutions receiving agricultural research, education, and extension formula funds from NIFA of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to establish and implement processes for obtaining input from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, extension, or education concerning the use of such funds by October 1, 1999. Section 102(c) further requires that the Secretary of Agriculture promulgate regulations that prescribe what the institutions must do to meet this requirement and the consequences of not complying with this requirement per the final rule (7 CFR 3418) on Stakeholder Input Requirements for Recipients of Agricultural Research, Education, and Extension Formula Funds which was published in the *Federal Register* on February 8, 2000 (73 FR 80361). This rule applies not only to the land-grant institutions which receive formula funds but also to the veterinary and forestry schools that are not land-grant institutions but which receive forestry research funds under the McIntire-Stennis Act of 1962 and animal health and disease research funds under section 1433 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA). Failure to comply with the requirements of this rule may result in the withholding of a recipient institution's formula funds and redistribution of its share of formula funds to other eligible institutions. The institutions are required to annually

report to NIFA: 1) the actions taken to seek stakeholder input to encourage their participation; 2) a brief statement of the process used by the recipient institution to identify individuals and groups who are stakeholders and to collect input from them; and 3) a statement of how collected input was considered. However, the 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions are required to report on their Stakeholder Input Process annually as part of their Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results. Non-Land Grant Universities who receive forestry research funds and animal health and disease research funds do not report in this information collection.

Section 103(e) of AREERA requires that the 1862, 1890, and 1994 land-grant institutions establish a merit review process, prior to October 1, 1999, in order to obtain agricultural research and extension funds. Section 104(h) of AREERA also stipulated that a scientific peer review process be established for research programs funded under section 3(c)(3) of the Hatch Act (commonly referred to as Hatch Multistate Research Funds). These guidelines require that a description of the merit review process and, if applicable, a description of the scientific peer review process be included in the 5-Year Plan of Work.

These guidelines also provide instructions on when and how to submit the update to the 5-Year Plan of Work. An Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results is also required in order for NIFA to provide program oversight and ensure adequate accountability of funds.

NIFA is requesting to continue to collect an update to the 5-Year Plan of Work which began with the Fiscal Year 2007, and, as a result, no longer needs to collect the initial 5-Year Plan. Also, as required by the Food Conservation and Energy Act of 2002 (FCEA) (P.L. 110-246, Sec. 7505) NIFA is working with the university partners in extension and research to review and identify measures to streamline the submission, reporting under, and implementation of Plan of Work requirements.

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

This collection of information will be received by the Planning, Accountability and Reporting Staff (PARS) of NIFA via the web-based NIFA Reporting Portal at <http://portal.nifa.usda.gov>. PARS coordinates the reviews of the State Plans of Work for the 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions by Agency program and scientific experts. In doing this, PARS ensures that the above requirements have been met by the land-grant institutions and that all criteria within each requirements are satisfactorily reported. NIFA program officials will also provide feedback to the institutions on their Plans of Work and Annual Reports of Accomplishments and Results in order for institutions to improve the conduct and the delivery of their programs. PARS will then inform the Office of Grants and Financial Management whether formula funds may be released to the recipient institutions.

3. USE OF IMPROVED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

The recipients of agricultural research, education, and extension formula funds provide this information to NIFA via a web-based system. The web-based system is housed in the NIFA reporting portal. The POW web based application is only accessible through the NIFA portal at <https://portal.nifa.usda.gov>. In the portal, there is a link for “Plan of Work,” which is accessible only to those institution representatives and Directors who have been granted access.

4. EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY DUPLICATION

This particular collection of information is not available to NIFA through any other source or means. Since the 1862 land-grant institutions and the 1890 land-grant institutions will be reporting the stakeholder input process as part of their Plan of Work, and annually as part of their Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results, they will not be required to report separately on the stakeholder input process. The Plan of Work reporting requirements will satisfy the stakeholder input requirements under 7 CFR 3418 which implements the stakeholder input requirements of section 102(c) of AREERA. In addition, those recipients of forestry and animal health research funds that are also land-grant institutions will be exempt from any additional reporting requirements if the stakeholder input process for these funds has already been addressed through the Plan of Work process.

5. METHODS TO MINIMIZE BUDGET OF SMALL BUSINESSES OR ENTITIES

This information collection will have very little impact on small businesses or small entities as the respondents are the 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions.

6. CONSEQUENCE IF INFORMATION COLLECTION WERE LESS FREQUENT

These Guidelines for State Plans of Work for Agricultural Research and Extension Formula Funds provide maximum flexibility for the land-grant institutions while providing adequate accountability for agricultural research and extension formula funds. The Plans of Work for these formula funds are required for the proposed period with a provision that these plans be updated annually to add an additional year so that the plan is always looking ahead five years. Thus States will not have to complete an entirely new 5-Year Plan of Work every 5 years. The Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results is needed to ensure that agricultural research and extension formula funds are being expended on critical agricultural issues in the States; that the stakeholder input and program review processes are implemented; and that institutions are directing a portion of their formula funds, as specified by law, to multi state and integrated research and extension activities. The AREERA legislation requires that NIFA know if these requirements are being met prior to the release of formula funds to these land-grant institutions each fiscal year.

The Plan of Work web based system is the only vehicle through which NIFA is able to collect data required by AREERA. Specifically, the requirements of sections 202 and

225 of AREERA dictate that a Plan of Work must be submitted by each institution and approved by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) before formula funds may be provided to the 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions. Additionally, this system satisfies the requirements of section 102(c) of AREERA for the 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions, which requires that NIFA establish and implement processes for obtaining input from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, extension, or education concerning the use of such funds. If this information is not collected, NIFA would be in violation of the above mandates as required by AREERA.

7. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR INFORMATION COLLECTION

There are no special circumstances for this information collection.

8. FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE

This renewal of this information collection was published in the Federal Register (80, FR 44028) on July 24, 2015. The comment period for the proposed collection of information was for the required 60 days. No comments were received from this announcement.

CONSULTATIONS WITH PERSONS OUTSIDE THE AGENCY

As required by the FCEA, NIFA has worked with the university partners in extension and research to review and identify measures to streamline the submission, reporting under, and implementation of Plan of Work requirements. In May, 2010, a Plan of Work Panel of Experts was hosted by NIFA in order to identify changes to be made in the Plan of Work collection without increasing the burden on respondents to POW requirements (such burden was calculated based on a 2008 survey of land-grant institutions). The Panel of Experts demonstrated representation from the following land-grant institutions: University of Tennessee, Virginia Tech, University of Nevada, New Mexico State University, University of Alaska, Rutgers, University of Maine, Purdue University, University of Wisconsin, Southern University, and West Virginia State University.

9. DECISION TO PROVIDE ANY PAYMENT OR GIFT TO RESPONDENTS, OTHER THAN REMUNERATION OF CONTRACTORS OR GRANTEEES

Not applicable.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY PROVIDED TO RESPONDENTS

No privacy and/or confidentiality issues are anticipated with this information collection.

11. QUESTIONS OF A SENSITIVE NATURE

No information of a sensitive nature will be requested.

12. ESTIMATE OF BURDEN

There are two transactions involved with this collection of information: the Annual Update to the 5-Year Plan of Work; and submission of the Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results.

I. Annual Update to 5-Year Plan of Work

Estimate of the Burden: The total reporting and record keeping requirements for the submission of the "Annual Update to the 5-Year Plan of Work" is estimated to average 64 hours per response. There are five components of this "5-Year Plan of Work": "Planned Programs," "Stakeholder Input Process," "Program Review Process," "Multi-state Activities," and "Integrated Activities."

Estimated Number of Respondents: 76.

Estimated Number of Responses: 152

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 9,728 hours.

Frequency of Responses: Annually

II. Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results

Estimate of the Burden: The total annual reporting and record keeping requirements of the "Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results" is estimated to average 260 hours per response.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 75.

Estimated Number of Responses: 152

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 39,520 hours.

Frequency of Responses: Annually.

The total annual burden of this collection is 49,248 hours.

Estimated Costs to respondents:

I. Annual Update to the Plan of Work

Total Costs:

	Hours	Rate	Total
Professional Burden Hours	61	\$38.19	\$2329.59
Clerical Burden Hours	3	\$20.48	\$61.44
Total Costs per Response			\$2391.03
Total Costs: (\$2,329.59 x 152 responses) =			<u>\$363,436.56</u>

II. Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results

Total Costs:

	Hours	Rate	Total
Professional Burden Hours	235	\$38.19	\$8,974.65
Clerical Burden Hours	25	\$20.48	\$512.00
Total Costs per Response:			\$9,486.65
Total Costs: (\$9,486.65 x 152 responses) =			<u>\$1,441,970.80</u>

The total annual cost to respondents of this collection is \$1,805,407.36

13. CAPITAL/STARTUP COSTS

There is no capital or startup or ongoing operation/maintenance costs associated with this information collection.

14. ANNUALIZED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

It is estimated that it will take 1,190 hours to collect and review the Updates to the 5-Year Plans of Work and 1,190 hours to collect and review the Annual Reports of Accomplishments and Results. NIFA estimates an annualized cost to the Federal Government of \$147,964.60.

15. REASONS FOR CHANGE IN BURDEN

There burden changed because of two transactions involved with this collection of information: the Annual Update to the 5-Year Plan of Work; and submission of the Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results.

16. TABULATION, ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION PLANS

Not applicable.

17. SEEKING APPROVAL TO NOT DISPLAY THE EXPIRATION DATE FOR OMB APPROVAL OF THE INFORMATION COLLECTION ON FORMS

This information is collected in an electronic system and it requires system changes to update the date.

18. EXCEPTION(S) TO THE CERTIFICATION STATEMENT (19) ON OMB 83-1

None.