

SUPPORTING STATEMENT B

Fellowship Management System (FMS)

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Project Officer:

Linda Vo-Green, MPH, CHES

Health Scientist

Division of Scientific Education and Professional Development (DSEPD)

Center for Surveillance, Epidemiology and Laboratory Services (CSELS)

Office of Public Health Scientific Services (OPHSS)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

1600 Clifton Road Northeast, Mailstop E-92

Atlanta, GA 30333

Phone: 404-498-0057

Fax: 404-498-6535

Email: wuw9@cdc.gov

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

The collection of information does not employ statistical methods. The information collected is used for program management.

1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

The respondent universe consists of professionals in public health, epidemiology, medicine, economics, information science, veterinary medicine, nursing, pharmacy, public policy, and related professions, and medical, veterinary, and graduate students who apply to the CDC fellowship programs, alumni of the fellowship programs, and employees of public health agencies who will submit host site assignment proposals to the fellowship programs as stated in this information collection request (ICR) for revision. No sampling methods will be used.

2. Procedures for the Collection of Information

In the currently approved Fellowship Management System (FMS) information collection, applicants (Attachment 3, FMS Application Module) enter all information required to complete an application for a fellowship or training program into the FMS. Once in the FMS, they have the ability to update information if they apply to other fellowships or the same fellowship in subsequent years. The fellowship programs' staffs collect the applications and monitor receipt of applications during each fellowship program's application cycle; all fellowship cycles occur once per calendar year except for Epi-Elect, which has a fall and a spring rotation.

In the currently approved FMS information collection, alumni (Attachment 4, FMS Alumni Directory) are encouraged to update their information any time they wish, which occurs on average every three years. Fellowship alumni associations and fellowship newsletters encourage alumni to participate by sending announcements and reminders that include a link to the alumni directory. For example, the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) fellowship alumni association sends announcements and reminders to EIS alumni with a link to the EIS directory and fellowship newsletters and bulletin include reminders for alumni to keep information current with a link to the directory. The Division of Scientific Education and Professional Development Program (DSEPD) programmatic staffs monitor the alumni directory several times each year to determine the completion rate.

In the currently approved FMS information collection, employees of public health agencies (Attachment 5, FMS Host Site Module), enter into FMS all information required to complete a host site assignment proposal to host a fellow only once. However, they have the ability to update data if they submit assignment proposals to other fellowship programs, or to the same fellowship in subsequent years. The fellowship programs encourage potential host sites to submit their proposal through the "call for assignment proposals" link published on the CDC fellowship websites. The fellowship programmatic staff collects the assignment proposals and monitors receipt of proposals or descriptions, annually, prior the beginning of an application cycle for each fellowship program.

3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with Non-response

Response rates for applications are dependent upon interest in applying for a CDC fellowship as described in this ICR. Candidates must submit a complete application to be considered for any fellowship program.

Participation in the alumni directory is voluntary and respondents are encouraged to participate. Fellowship alumni associations and fellowship newsletters remind and encourage alumni to participate. In addition, fellowship alumni associations send announcements and reminders (which include a link to their fellowship directory) to alumni to keep their information current in the directory. DSEPD programmatic staff monitor the directory several times each year to determine the rate of completion. Participation provides alumni the opportunity to maintain professional networks for finding jobs, staffing jobs, and collaborating and interacting with fellow alumni. Alumni value networks and relationships they established during their fellowships. Participation allows CDC to maintain current information on alumni to call upon them when necessary, to assist in responses to national public health emergencies or urgent public health needs.

Response rates for public health agencies are dependent upon interest in hosting and training a fellow, as described in this ICR. Respondents representing public health agencies requesting a fellow must submit a complete assignment proposal for the requesting agency to be considered by any fellowship program as a host assignment.

4. Tests of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken

Prior to submitting the initial FMS OMB ICR in 2007, an initial pilot was conducted with CDC employees to refine questions, minimize burden, and to improve FMS usability. Following the initial pilot, a second pilot was conducted with CDC employees and nine non-federal employees from the target audience to determine how long it would take to complete the fellowship application and directory. The pilot test results provided the numbers used in the initial burden tables. Those numbers were validated with actual applicants and alumni upon approval in 2011.

In 2011, a pilot was conducted with CDC employees inputting assignment proposal data into the Public Health Associate Program (PHAP) host site assignment proposal. Over the ensuing years, FMS users informally provided the fellowship programs with feedback to enhance functionalities (e.g., document upload) and clarify instructions and questions (e.g., improve wording), which are revised in this ICR. Based on this recent feedback, the burden hours are updated accordingly. The increase in burden hours is associated with the increased number of respondents who voluntarily submit information across the three data collections. Moreover, fellowship staff observed that recent applicants provide more information than observed in previous years.

5. Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data

Staff from each fellowship program collects the information and compiles it for inclusion in program reports documenting fellowship progress and performance; only aggregate data will be reported. Programmatic data from FMS reported include trends and program data such as the number and types of applicants and host sites, number of selected and matched candidates and assignments, and demographics of alumni (e.g., employed in private or government sector). No statistical analysis will be conducted.