

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

Part A

Return on Investment of AHRQ's Individual Career Development (K)
Award Program Evaluation

OMB No. 0935-0106

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Agency of Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

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A. Justification

1. Circumstances that make the collection of information necessary

The mission of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) set out in its authorizing legislation, The Healthcare Research and Quality Act of 1999 (see <http://www.ahrq.gov/hrqa99.pdf>), is to enhance the quality, appropriateness, and effectiveness of health services, and access to such services, through the establishment of a broad base of scientific research and through the promotion of improvements in clinical and health systems practices, including the prevention of diseases and other health conditions. AHRQ shall promote health care quality improvement by conducting and supporting:

1. research that develops and presents scientific evidence regarding all aspects of health care; and
2. the synthesis and dissemination of available scientific evidence for use by patients, consumers, practitioners, providers, purchasers, policy makers, and educators; and
3. initiatives to advance private and public efforts to improve health care quality.

Also, AHRQ shall conduct and support research and evaluations, and support demonstration projects, with respect to (A) the delivery of health care in inner-city areas, and in rural areas (including frontier areas); and (B) health care for priority populations, which shall include (1) low-income groups, (2) minority groups, (3) women, (4) children, (5) the elderly, and (6) individuals with special health care needs, including individuals with disabilities and individuals who need chronic care or end-of-life health care

Recognizing that the AHRQ Individual and Mentored Career (K) Award program is a long-standing research training and career development program that provides support and “protected time” for research and clinical doctoral degree holders to enable their engagement in an intensive, supervised research career development experience in health services research, the purpose of the present evaluation is to assess the return on investment of this training program. Evaluation findings will provide summary information about the research training experiences and post-award professional pursuits and achievements of applicants and grantees. This information may be used to inform the scope and focus of future career development investments under AHRQ’s mission: “To produce evidence to make health care safer, higher quality, more accessible, equitable, and affordable, and to work with HHS and other partners to make sure that the evidence is understood and used.”

This program evaluation has the following goals:

- 1) Collect data regarding the extent of awardees current research and clinical care

participation

- 2) Identify awardee challenges to career progression, such as lack of funding, competitive job market, balancing work/family and research/clinical duties, and others; and
- 3) Understand perceived benefits of K funding beyond the grantee, such as improvements in care delivery, health policy, and other areas (parameters to be determined in discussion with AHRQ)

To achieve the goals of this project the following data collections will be implemented:

- 1) AHRQ K Program Awardee Survey (N=167)

This evaluation study is being conducted by AHRQ through its contractor, Atlas Research, pursuant to AHRQ's statutory authority to conduct and support research on healthcare and on systems for the delivery of such care, including activities with respect to the quality, effectiveness, efficiency, appropriateness and value of healthcare services and with respect to quality measurement and improvement. 42 U.S.C. 299a(a)(1) and (2).

2. Purpose and Use of Information

The evaluation will examine the benefits resulting from the AHRQ's support of Individual Career Development (K series) Programs. Included in the evaluation are three mechanisms: the Mentored Research Scientist Research Career Development Award (K01); the Independent Scientist Career Development Award (K02); and the Mentored Clinical Scientist Award (K08). This study is designed to address how the K program participants benefit from receipt of the award, and their subsequent contributions to the research field. The data collected will be used to inform AHRQ of the success of the AHRQ K Programs and may be used to improve the Programs for future grantees.

3. Use of Improved Information Technology

The survey will be conducted electronically via an online survey application. The use of the online survey will allow the project team to actively monitor the survey, including the number of awardees who have completed the survey. This information will be monitored on a weekly basis and communicated back to the project lead and Task Order Officer. To encourage timely completion of the training, email reminders will be sent to awardees periodically throughout the data collection process.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication

This will be the first data collection initiative of its kind for AHRQ. Similar evaluations of K-Award grantees have been performed by other Federal agencies (National Institutes for Health, Department of Veterans Affairs). With this survey, AHRQ will be better able to understand how its award recipients fare in comparison to those from other agencies.

5. Involvement of Small Entities

This project does not intend to intentionally involve nor exclude or impact any small entities. The instruments and procedures used to collect data are designed to minimize the burden on all respondents.

6. Consequences if Information Collected Less Frequently

This project is a one-time data collection effort. The data collection period will last for approximately three months to allow time for awardees participate in the online survey.

7. Special Circumstances

This request is consistent with the general information collection guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5(d)(2). No special circumstances apply.

8. Federal Register Notice and Outside Consultations

8.a. Federal Register Notice

Since this information collection request is being submitted under AHRQ's Customer Satisfaction Generic Clearance (0935-0106) publication in the Federal Register is not required.

8.b. Outside Consultations

As this survey is not duplicative of any other work within HHS we will not consult with other agencies for this effort.

9. Payments/Gifts to Respondents

AHRQ will not provide any payment or gift to survey respondents. AHRQ believes that awardees will be motivated to participate due to their prior participation in the AHRQ K Award Program or because of the opportunity to participate in a research project with AHRQ, not because of monetary incentives.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality

Individuals and organizations will be assured of the confidentiality of their replies under Section 944(c) of the Public Health Service Act. 42 U.S.C. 299c-3(c). That law requires that information collected for research conducted or supported by AHRQ that identifies individuals or establishments be used only for the purpose for which it was supplied.

All information will be collected over a secure channel and stored on a secure server. Information will be password-protected at all times, and the identifiable information (participant name and email address) will be destroyed at the end of the effort. AHRQ will not ask any sensitive or health-related questions of the participants.

11. Questions of a Sensitive Nature

The data collection protocols do not contain any questions concerning sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, income or proprietary business information. Respondents to the survey will be explicitly informed that their participation is voluntary, information they provide is confidential to the extent provided by law, and they may choose to withdraw from the study or not respond to specific items without penalty.

12. Estimates of Annualized Burden Hours and Costs

Exhibit 1 shows the estimated annualized burden hours for the respondent's time to complete the survey. The Awardee Survey will take about 15 minutes to complete, resulting in a total of 41.75 burden hours.

Exhibit 2 shows the estimated cost burden associated with the respondent's time to complete the survey. The total annualized cost burden is estimated to be \$1,544,457.

Exhibit 1. Estimated annualized burden hours

4.Form Name	Number of respondents	Number of responses per respondent	Hours per response	Total burden hours
Awardee Survey	167	1	15/60	41.75
Total	167	na	na	41.75

Exhibit 2. Estimated annualized cost burden

Form Name	Number of respondents	Total burden hours	Average hourly wage rate*	Total cost burden
Awardee Survey	167	41.75	\$36.97 ^a	\$1,544.00
Total	167	41.75	na	\$1,544.00

* National Compensation Survey: Occupational wages in the United States May 2013, "U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics."

^a Based on the mean wages for "Life Scientists, All Other" 19-1099

13. Estimates of Annualized Respondent Capital and Maintenance Costs

There are no direct costs to respondents other than their time to participate in the study.

14. Estimates of Annualized Cost to the Government

AHRQ will use in-house staff and contractors to conduct the survey. EPA staff will oversee the contractor staff working on the survey, and send out the pre-notification emails to potential respondents. It is estimated that administering the survey will require 90 hours of an FTE at AHRQ headquarters. The cost for AHRQ staff is estimated to be \$77.62 per hour, based on the 2012 wage rate for a GS-13, Step 5 employee in the Washington-Baltimore locality, with a government overhead factor of 1.6 to account for fringe benefits and overhead. This is equivalent to an EPA staff cost of approximately \$23,064. ARHQ’s cost for sending the pre-notification emails will be \$0 as no postage is required. AHRQ will incur costs for contractor staff to administer the telephone survey, process and analyze the data, and prepare survey documentation.

Exhibit 3. Estimated Total and Annualized Cost

Cost Component	Labor Hours	Total Cost
Survey Development	40	\$3104.80
Data Collection Activities	10	\$776.20
Data Processing and Analysis	N/A	
Publication of Results	N/A	
Project Management	40	\$3104.80
Overhead	N/A	\$4191.48
Total		\$11,177.28

15. Changes in Hour Burden

This is a new collection of information.

16. Time Schedule, Publication and Analysis Plans

Pending OMB approval, we plan to keep the survey open during the months of June, July, and August 2015. Analysis of survey results will take place September through November of 2015. The final analysis and report will be provided to AHRQ in November of 2015.

17. Exemption for Display of Expiration Date

AHRQ does not seek this exemption.

List of Attachments:

Attachment A-- Awardee Survey