

## Mini Supporting Statement A

# Communications Fellowship (NCF) Program Application, National Cancer Institute (NCI)

Sub-study under,  
“Generic Clearance for Application Information for  
Fellowship, Internships, Training Programs, and Specialty Positions  
(National Cancer Institute)”

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – National Cancer Institute’s Communications Fellowship (NCF) Application

Attachment 2 – NCF Feedback Survey

Attachment 3 – NCF Reference Letter Module

Attachment 4 – NCF Auto Emails

Attachment 5 – Privacy Impact Assessment

Attachment 6 – Privacy Act Memo

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

The National Cancer Institute's Communications Fellowship (NCF) program gives highly-qualified graduate students and recent graduate degree recipients the opportunity to participate in vital communications projects in a one-year fellowship in one of many offices that make up the NCI. Applying to the NCF program through the NCF website application is required in order for current graduate student and recent graduate student candidates to be considered for entry into the program. The purpose of the NCF Application is to assure that candidates for the NCF program meet basic eligibility requirements; to assess their potential as future communications professionals; to determine where mutual communications interests exist; and to make decisions regarding which applicants will be proposed and approved for fellowship awards. The information is for internal use to make decisions about prospective fellows that could benefit from the NCF program.

The National Cancer Institute's Communications Fellowship (NCF) program fulfills the requirements of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) training authority as established under: Section 413 (b) (3) of the Public Health Service Act, 42 USC 285a-2 (b) (3), as amended pertaining to the NCI, which states that the NCI Director, in carrying out the National Cancer Program . . . shall . . . "support appropriate programs of education and training (including continuing education and laboratory and clinical research training)". In addition, enhancing the diversity of the cancer research workforce in the nation is an NCI priority.

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

The purpose of the NCF Application (**Attachment 1**) is to assure that candidates for the NCF program meet basic eligibility requirements; to assess their potential as future communications professionals; to determine where mutual communications interests exist; and to make decisions regarding which applicants will be proposed and approved for fellowship awards. The information is for internal use to make decisions about prospective fellows who could benefit from the NCF program.

Participation in the NCF program includes U.S. citizens and U.S. permanent residents. Individuals from underrepresented populations, consistent with NIH's Notice of Interest and Diversity ([NOT-OD-18-210](#)), are encouraged to apply for the program.

The full-time fellowship program includes graduate degree-seeking individuals and graduate degree recipients.

This request is to implement the electronic version of the NCF Application (Attachment 1) involving approximately 120 applicants. Prospective NCF fellows must apply directly to NCI. The NCF Application is web-based and accessible through the NCI web site: <https://ncf.nci.nih.gov/>. A pilot of the NCF Application was approved by OMB (#0925-0046) and implemented in January 2019 to assess the clarity of the instructions and the functionality of the NCF system. Additionally, we will be requesting another feedback survey (**Attachment 2**) involving approximately 120 applicants, with the purpose of collecting input on the application's usability.

Prospective NCF fellows must apply directly to NCI. The NCF application (**Attachment 1**) is a web-based application. Once submitted, the application generates an email request to two references who are asked to submit a letter of recommendation on behalf of the applicant. The email links them to an online textbox where they can submit their reference letter (**Attachment 3**). Two reference letters are required for each applicant.

Automated system emails are sent out to applicants at various times throughout the application cycle, all the way to before the candidates begin their fellowship. There are 12 auto-generated emails sent depending on the prospective fellow's status in the application review (**Attachment 4**).

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

Submission of an NCF application is required to be considered for the program. The online application saves time and resources, and lessens the burden to the applicants, references, and government employees accessing the applications.

The application is web-based. The applicant will receive an automated email confirming submission and in this email a link to complete the feedback survey (**Attachment 2**) will be included.

The NCI Privacy Act Coordinator was consulted, and it was determined that a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) is required. The PIA has been submitted to the NIH Privacy Act Coordinator for final approval and once received we will submit to OMB. (**Attachment 5**).

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

This information will not be collected anywhere else and is unique to the candidate's application.

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

There is no impact on small businesses or other small entities.

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

The information will be voluntarily collected once per year.

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

There are no special circumstances.

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

N/A

### **A.9 Explanation of Any Payment of Gift to Respondents**

Neither payments nor gifts will be provided to respondents.

### **A.10 Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents**

All information will be kept private to the extent provided by law. Only applicants will have the ability to initiate their applications using a password protected login of their choice.

### **A.11 Justification for Sensitive Questions**

Personal identifiable information (PII) will be collected on the NCF application. This includes: full name, phone number, email, citizenship status, home address, school name, and contact information for two references.

In addition, the NCF application asks applicants to fill out a Diversity Statement, where they are asked to explain how their participating would further the goal of the NCF to encourage diversity in NCI's workforce, consistent with NIH's Notice of Interest and Diversity ([NOT-OD-18-210](#)),

Using this Diversity Statement, applicants may specify whether they are from an underrepresented population or if they are financially disadvantaged. If they qualify based on financial disadvantage, they must submit recent tax forms showing that their income is below guidelines issued annually by the Department of Health and Human Services and published in the Federal Register under the title, "Low-Income Levels" Used for Various Health Professions and Nursing Programs Authorized in Titles III, VII, and VIII of the Public Health Service Act.

**A.12 Estimated Annualized Burden Hours and Cost to the Respondents**

The estimated total number of respondents is 480. The instruments are broken up into three sections. The first instrument is the burden hours it takes for an applicant to fill out and submit their application along, followed by a 3 minute feedback survey on the application process. It is estimated that 120 candidates will apply. The second instrument are the burden hours it takes the references to write and submit a reference letter for each applicant. Each applicant has 2 references, so it is estimated that there will be 240 respondents.

The application should take approximately 60 minutes to complete and the reference letter should take 30 minutes to complete. The total estimated burden hour included for this information collection is 246 hours (Table A.12-1) and the cost to the respondents is estimated to be \$7,193.64 (Table A.12-2).

**Table A.12-1 Estimated Annualized Burden Hours:**

Category of Respondent	Number of Respondents	Number of Responses Per Respondent	Average Time Per Response (in hours)	Total Annual Burden Hours
Individuals (Attachment 1 – Application)	120	1	1	120
Individuals (Attachment 2 – Feedback Survey)	120	1	3/60	6
Individuals (Attachment 3 – Reference Letter)	240	1	30/60	120
<b>Totals</b>		<b>480</b>		<b>246</b>

**Table A.12.2 Annualized Cost to the Respondents**

Category of Respondent	Total Annual Burden Hour	Hourly Wage Rate	Respondent Cost
Individuals (Attachment 1 & 2)	126	\$24.34*	\$3,066.84
Individuals (Attachment 3 – Reference Letter)	120	\$34.39**	\$4,126.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>246</b>		<b>\$7,193.64</b>

\* The mean hourly wage rate for the ICRC applicants is cited from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, All Occupations, Occupation Code 00-0000. [https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_nat.htm](https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm).

\*\*The mean hourly wage rate for Postsecondary Teachers is cited from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupation code 25-1081. <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes251081.htm>. Wages for teachers that do not generally work year-round, full time, are reported as annual salaries depending on how they are typically paid. Annual Mean Wage for college and university professors is \$71,530. To determine the Hourly Wage Rate in the table above, the Annual Mean Wage was leveled over 40 hours per week, times 52 weeks per year (2,080). This amounts to \$71,530 divided by 2,080, which equals \$34.39.

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

There are no capital costs, operating costs, or maintenance costs to report.

#### **A.14 Annualized Cost to the Federal Government**

The annualized cost to the Federal Government for the proposed data collection effort is estimated to be \$61,642.12 (Table A.14.1). The NCF federal personnel are responsible for reviewing and distributing the applications. The contractor tasks include the design and management of the NCF application.

**Table A.14.1 Annualized Cost to the Federal Government**

<b>Staff</b>	<b>Grade/Step</b>	<b>Salary**</b>	<b>% of Effort</b>	<b>Fringe (if applicable)</b>	<b>Total Cost to Gov't</b>
<b>Federal Oversight</b>					
NCF Program Manager	12/2	\$86,179	20%		\$17,235.80
Chief, Workforce Development Branch	14/7	\$140,632	1%		\$1,406.32
<b>Contractor Cost</b>					\$43,000
Travel					\$0
Other Cost					\$0
<b>Total</b>					<b>\$61,642.12</b>

\*\*The Salary Table of a Federal Employee can be referenced at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/19Tables/html/DCB.aspx>

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

This is a mini Supporting Statement for a generic information collection.

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

There are no plans for tabulation or publication of the NCF application. The information collected will be used to assess the appropriateness of applicants to the NCF program and to communicate accepted applicant's qualifications to prospective NCI mentors for fellowship placement.

The NCF application opens annually for applicants in early January and closes mid-February. It is anticipated that this submission will cover the 2020, 2021, and 2022 application cycles.

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

We are not requesting an exemption to the display of the OMB Expiration Date.

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

This survey will comply with the requirements in 5 C.F.R. 1320.9.