

Supporting Statement A for

Collection of grant and contract data that may be of interest to

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and small businesses

NIH/OD/OALM

OMB# 0925-XXXX and expiration date (if any)

Date: January 13, 2020

Check off which applies:

- New
- Revision
- Reinstatement with Change
- Reinstatement without Change
- Extension
- Emergency
- Existing w/o OMB approval

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Attachments (save file names to match what is being referenced: (ex: x.baseline; y.screener)

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Collection Entry Screens

Attachment 2 – Rules of Behavior

Attachment 3 – Privacy Impact Assessment

A. Justification

This effort supports the NIH Path to Excellence and Innovation (PEI) Program formed in accordance with Presidential Executive Order 13779, *The White House Initiative to Promote Excellence and Innovation at Historically Black Colleges and Universities* (HBCUs). The HBCU pre-solicitation portal is a tool to collect NIH contracts and grants data that HBCUs and their business teaming partners may be interested in pursuing. The portal will provide a streamlined platform for NIH funding opportunities that consolidate information from four different Federal websites. Additionally, this tool has a social networking component that will create a space for HBCUs and businesses to collaborate as they pursue of NIH funding opportunities. Through the collection and analysis of this information, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Small Business Program Office (SBPO) will assist in strengthening HBCUs' ability to equitably participate in Federal funding programs.

A.1 Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

Presidential Executive Order 13779 is the *White House Initiative to Promote Excellence and Innovation of HBCUs*. This Executive Order mandates agencies to assist in strengthening HBCU's ability for equitable participation in Federal programs and explore new ways to improve the relationship between the Federal Government and HBCUs. This initiative will establish how each agency intends to increase the capacity of HBCUs to compete effectively for grants and contracts.

The PEI is a comprehensive plan to increase the capacity of HBCUs as they pursue funding opportunities at the NIH. The PEI provides a platform to increase transparency between HBCUs and the NIH by promoting outreach events and training opportunities and providing technical assistance. Currently, there are six HBCU participants and each selected a minimum of one small business teaming partner to pursue NIH funding opportunities with.

HBCUs are institutions of higher education in the United States that were established before the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and are vital engines in improving the socioeconomic outcomes of minorities. The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, defines an HBCU as "...any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary [of Education] to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation."¹

A small business is defined as a privately owned company in the legal form of a corporation, partnership, or sole proprietorship. The Small Business Administration (SBA) defines a small business as one that typically makes a maximum of \$750,000 to \$38.5 million in annual revenue and has less than 100 to 1,500 employees. The annual revenue and number of employee depends on the industry of the small business. The majority of businesses are small businesses.² The NIH's small business statutes encompass small businesses, small disadvantaged businesses, women owned, HUBZone, and service-disabled small businesses.

¹ <https://sites.ed.gov/whhbcu/about-us/>

² <https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/advocacy/2018-Small-Business-Profiles-US.pdf>

HBCU Teams

HBCU	Small Business Partners
Hampton University	ESC Inc.
Howard University	Versa Integrated Solutions
Jackson State University	The Jones Group Longevity Consulting, LLC
Meharry Medical College	ADA Consulting B3 Solutions Millennium Corporation
Morehouse School of Medicine	Supreme Solutions Inc.
The University of the Virgin Islands	Exnihilo Management and Omni Systems Inc.

The goals of this OMB study for collecting this data are:

- Establish how the NIH intends to increase the capacity of HBCUs to compete effectively for grants, contracts or cooperative agreements
- Identify Federal programs and initiatives where HBCUs are not well represented, and improve HBCUs participation in those programs and initiatives
- Develop a reference manual/curriculum on how to do business with Federal Government for the schools
- Develop WIN strategies using existing small business rules/regulations to leverage potential opportunities
- Encourage public-sector, private-sector, and community involvement in improving the overall capacity of HBCUs
- Seek funding to continue the contract support for the initiative

Before the user can access the HBCU pre-solicitation portal, see Attachment 1 “Collection Entry Screens,” an account will be provisioned for them by the NIH SBPO staff with a secure password. This will allow them to report on grants and contracts of interest and view grant and contract opportunities.

The HBCU pre-solicitation portal will provide a central repository for HBCUs and small businesses to report Federal grants and contracts of interest. The system will allow them to see what grants and contracts are available through periodic data uploads from grants.nih.gov, NIH RePORTER, beta.sam.gov, and FPDS.gov. The data uploaded from these sites will reduce the user’s reporting effort by prepopulating about 75% of the data input fields. Consolidating the upcoming grants and contracts into this system will decrease the burden on the HBCUs and businesses by giving them one site to access NIH funding opportunities. The information entered by an HBCU or a business is viewable only by that HBCU or business and the NIH SBPO staff.

Another advantage of the HBCU pre-solicitation portal is the guidance provided by the NIH SBPO staff when users indicate an opportunity of interest. The HBCU pre-solicitation portal also offers a social networking

platform that allows for and promotes collaboration between the NIH SBPO staff, HBCUs and their business partners.

This HBCU pre-solicitation portal will replace a manual process that is done by the NIH SBPO to satisfy government reporting requirements. This reporting will provide the NIH SBPO staff insight into the HBCU/business partner team's grant and contract interests and providing baseline data to analyze unsuccessful and successful application rates. The information collected will also provide data regarding HBCUs engagement with NIH Institutes or Centers (ICs), contract offices, and programs, potentially revealing NIH hot spots and areas where HBCUs may be underutilized.

A.2 Purpose and Use of the Information Collection

The purpose and use of the proposed information collection is to provide the NIH SBPO staff with insight into HBCUs and their business partner's interests in various government grants and contracts relevant to their organizations. This analysis will also help the NIH SBPO staff to inform these entities of grants and contracts opportunities that they may otherwise not realize are available. Reporting this information is voluntary by the HBCUs and their business partners; however, providing grants and contracts of interest enables the NIH SBPO to make informed suggestions regarding other grants and contracts and reduces the burden of research on the user. In a future phase of this project, smart logic will be utilized to match HBCUs and small businesses to potential opportunities. Matching will be based on past opportunities the HBCUs and small business have indicated they are interested in and based on the users selected NIH ICs and organizational capabilities entered in their profile. HBCUs and their business partners can accept or reject recommended opportunities allowing the smart logic to learn schools' preferences over time and improve opportunity matches that are presented to them through their dashboard.

This effort by the NIH SBPO staff to inform HBCUs and small businesses about grants and contracts ties directly into the Presidential Executive Order 13779 where the agency intends to increase the capacity of HBCUs to compete effectively for grants and contracts in areas where HBCU's are not well represented.

A.3 Use of Information Technology and Burden Reduction

The collection database is a web based application and can be accessible through the following Web site: (<https://oamp.hbcu.od.nih.gov/oamp/login.do>). Features of the data collection system include, but are not limited to the following elements:

- Create a user account
- Enter data about grants an HBCU or small business is interested in
- Enter data about contract an HBCU or small business is interested in
- Dashboard to display grants and contracts that have been entered and other opportunities are available
- Facility to ask for assistance
- Collaboration facility with other small businesses and HBCUs

Additionally, the site provides the users access to content offering guidance when the users are interested in pursuing a grant or contract. The user interface for data input is well organized and streamlined. As a result of iterative data entry test cycles, the estimated time to input data for a grant or contract of interest is approximately 10-minutes.

There is no cost associated to using this system from an end user perspective.

The HBCU pre-solicitation portal loads data from the following sources: grants.nih.gov, NIH RePORTER, beta.sam.gov and FPDS.gov. This process reduces the data entry burden of the users when entering information regarding grants and contracts of interest.

A Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) has been completed and submitted for the HBCU pre-solicitation portal, see Attachment 3 “Privacy Impact Assessment”.

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

Currently, there is no web-based system to collect information regarding which grants and contracts the HBCUs and their business partners may be interested in applying for. When HBCU and business users add a grant or contract opportunity using the portal, most of the information will already be in the system due to the periodic data loads from various sources. The HBCUs and business partners would select the grant or contract they are interested in and approximately 75% of the information would be automatically populated. In addition the users benefit from the ability of the NIH staff to analyze and understand their interest and potentially present other possibilities of grants and contracts that they would not have been aware of. This online platform will support collaboration between the NIH SBPO and the hundreds of HBCU and business teaming partners enabling efficient communication. Currently these partnerships take place in person which requires funding and time for travel increasing expenses.

The HBCUs and businesses will also benefit from the smart logic functionality that will match schools and teaming partners with grant and contract opportunities that are displayed on the system’s dashboard. This will relieve the users of the burden of performing research and analysis.

A.5 Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities

The HBCU pre-solicitation portal benefits users by providing them access to consolidated data from different sources on one platform. While the HBCUs in our program are not restricted in selecting either a large or small teaming partner, subcontracting with small businesses is recommended for training purposes. Additionally, smart logic will match prospective grant and contract opportunities with the HBCUs and businesses. The online collaboration platform will make communications more efficient between NIH SBPO and the hundreds of HBCUs and their business teaming partners.

A.6 Consequences of Collecting the Information Less Frequently

The current manual tracking effort used to collect information regarding the grant and contract interests of the HBCU's and their business teaming partners indicates that these entities historically show interest in up to 10 contracts and 10 grants on a yearly basis. This process uses a spreadsheet as the tool to collect the data about contracts and grants. The number of 10 contracts and 10 grants is determined from the research done by the NIH SBPO staff in conjunction with the HBCUs and businesses considering previous contract and grant awards. The users of the HBCU pre-solicitation portal can access the system as many times as desired and use the consolidated information from the four sites to identify available government contracts and grants. The HBCU pre-solicitation portal does not restrict the user from looking at other sites to gain understanding of available contracts and grants; however, the HBCU pre-solicitation portal consolidates government contracts and grants from four of the sites that are normally accessed to obtain this information. Also, the future feature of auto-matching of contract and grant opportunities to the HBCUs and their business partners, the HBCU pre-solicitation portal will help them be better informed of opportunities that they may not be aware of and reduce the burden of researching these opportunities on one of the four aforementioned website. Since the availability of these contracts and grants can be sporadic, will enter their opportunities of interest into the HBCU pre-solicitation portal once the contract or grant is published to one of our four data sources. Only after these entities have determined interest in a particular contract or grant will they voluntarily enter the information into the HBCU pre-solicitation portal which has been estimated to take up to 10 minutes per grant or contract. There will be a beneficial consequence to the government if this information is collected because of the mandate to generate metrics regarding grants and contracts the HBCUs are interested in pursuing. Through the collection and analysis of this information the NIH SBPO can better serve the HBCUs and promote equitable participation in Federal programs.

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

Special circumstances relating to these guidelines do not apply to the information collected through the HBCU pre-solicitation portal. Individuals voluntarily submit this information to the NIH SBPO.

A.8.1 Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice

Notification of this information collection for the HBCU Pre-solicitation portal was originally published on Wednesday, October 30, 2019 (Vol. 84, No. 210 on pages 58162-58163). There were no comments received during the 60-day notice.

A.8.2 Efforts to Consult Outside Agency

There were no outside agencies consulted for the HBCU Pre-solicitation portal.

A.9 Explanation of Any Payment of Gift to Respondents

Neither payments nor gifts will be distributed to individuals to encourage the completion and submission of grant and contract data into the system.

The HBCUs and small businesses that choose to report into the system will benefit from a consolidation of government grants and contracts in one system. Analysis performed by the NIH SBPO may lead them to opportunities they may otherwise never be aware of. The tool provides awareness of HBCUs and small businesses and their capabilities, promoting collaboration between potential teaming partners.

A.10 Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents

The information collected/entered by the user is available only to that user and the NIH SBPO staff. The information will be used for government reporting requirements. The use of this information will adhere to NIH SORN [09-25-0156](#) "Records of Participants in Programs and Respondents in Surveys Used to Evaluate Programs of the Public Health Service, HHS/PHS/NIH/OD." (see page 60765).

The HBCUs and small businesses are assigned login credentials, including "strong" passwords that conform to standards used by the NIH Center for Information Technology, and the online tools these individuals use to enter data are restricted to HBCU and small business approved users. Users receive login credentials, including randomly generated or user-defined passwords, when they first apply.

PII collected when an account is being provisioned for access to the HBCU Pre-solicitation portal includes:

- Name
- Email Address
- Phone Numbers
- Mailing Addresses

The Rules of Behavior (ROB) are displayed on the HBCU Pre-solicitation portal website, see attachment 2 "Rules of Behavior".

A.11 Justification for Sensitive Questions

The HBCU Pre-solicitation portal does not contain sensitive questions as described in sections A.11.

A.12.1 Estimates of Hour Burden Including Annualized Hourly Costs

The estimated time to enter the information about a grant or contract into the system is approximately 10-minutes, which is based on the NIH contractor experience when testing the application. Users can revisit the data they have entered to change information they have provided regarding grants and contracts. Because these changes are not required for the information collected, time associated with these actions is not included in the estimate to enter the data.

Table A12-1 Estimate Annualized Burden Hours

Form Name	Type of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Number of Responses per Respondent	Average Burden per Response (in hours)	Total Annual Burden Hours
HBCU Pre-Solicitation Portal for Contracts and Grants	Private Sector	13	10	20/60	43
Total			130		43

A.12-2 Annual Cost to respondent

Table A12-2 Annualized cost to Respondent

Type of Respondents	Total Annual Burden Hours	Hourly Respondent Wage Rate*	Respondent Costs
Financial Analyst	20	\$41.80	\$836.00
Management Analyst	23	\$40.20	\$925.00
TOTAL			\$1,761.00

* Bureau of Labor Statistics: The General Public rate was obtained from the http://www.bls.gov/oes/2013/may/oes_nat.htm#00-0000

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 HBCU Pre-solicitation portal is a new system and the cost to the federal government to develop and deploy the application along with the cost of NIH SBPO staff is described in the table below. The annual cost for the support of the HBCU Pre-solicitation portal is approximately \$225,234.68 annually.

Cost Descriptions	Grade/Step	Salary*	% of Effort	Fringe (if applicable)	Total Cost to Gov't
Federal Oversight					
Program Analyst	Grade 9/Step1	\$57,510.00	.125% (5 hours per week)		\$7,189.00
Program Manager	Grade 14/Step9	\$148,445.00	.125% (5 hours per week)		\$18,556.20
Contractor Cost					\$199,489.48
Travel					0
Other Cost					0
Total					\$225,234.68

* the Salary in table above is cited from <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 new information collection request. As of this time there are no anticipated program changes or adjustments and this will be reviewed during the 3 year PRA cycle.

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

Information collected by the HBCU Pre-solicitation portal will not be published but the NIH SBPO staff will review the data entered by HBCUs and small businesses to obtain an understanding of the interests being pursued to perform analysis and suggest relevant opportunities they may want to consider.

Following list provides a general overview of the process that the NIH SBPO staff will execute:

A.16 - 1 Project Time Schedule	
Activity	Time Schedule
Inform HBCUs and small businesses of upcoming NIH events	1 - 2 months after OMB approval
Respond to any requests for assistance from the HBCU and small business users	1 - 12 months after OMB approval
Pull data from the HBCU Pre-solicitation portal	6 - 8 months after OMB approval

Perform analysis of interests by HBCUs and small business	9 - 11 months after OMB approval
Post suggested opportunities to the HBCU Pre-solicitation portal for HBCUs and small businesses	12 months after OMB approval

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

The OMB number and expiration date will be displayed.

A.18 Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions

There are no exceptions to the Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions.