

# **SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

## **Part A**

### **AHRQ Research Reporting System (ARRS) 0935-0122**

Previously known as Grants Reporting System (GRS)

**Version: 2/18/2020**

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.

AHRQ has developed a systematic method for its grantees to report project progress and important preliminary findings for grants funded by the Agency. This system, the AHRQ Research Reporting System (ARRS), previously known as the Grants Reporting System (GRS), was last approved by OMB on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017. The system addressed the shortfalls in the previous reporting process and established a consistent and comprehensive grants reporting solution for AHRQ. The ARRS provides a centralized repository of grants research progress and additional information that can be used to support initiatives within the Agency. This includes future research planning and support to administration activities such as performance monitoring, budgeting, knowledge transfer as well as strategic planning.

This Project has the following goals:

- 1) To promote the transfer of critical information more frequently and efficiently and enhance the Agency's ability to support research designed to improve the outcomes and quality of health care, reduce its costs, and broaden access to effective services
- 2) To increase the efficiency of the Agency in responding to ad-hoc information requests

- 3) To support Executive Branch requirements for increased transparency and public reporting
- 4) To establish a consistent approach throughout the Agency for information collection regarding grant progress and a systematic basis for oversight and for facilitating potential collaborations among grantees
- 5) To decrease the inconvenience and burden on grantees of unanticipated ad-hoc requests for information by the Agency in response to particular (one-time) internal and external requests for information

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

- 1) AHRQ Research Reporting System (ARRS) – Grantees and vendors use the ARRS system to report project progress and important preliminary findings for grants and contracts funded by the Agency. Grantees and vendors submit a progress report on a monthly or quarterly basis which are reviewed by AHRQ personnel. All users access the ARRS system through a secure online interface which requires a user id and password entered through the ARRS Login screen. When status reports are due AHRQ notifies Principle Investigators (PI) and Vendors via email (see Attachment B). See Attachment B for screen shots of the ARRS, Attachment C for a list of grants that have employed this reporting mechanism, and Attachment D for a list of contracts that have employed this reporting mechanism.

This study is being conducted by AHRQ 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 ARRS is an automated user-friendly resource that is utilized by AHRQ staff for preparing, distributing, and reviewing reporting requests to grantees and vendors for the purpose of information sharing. AHRQ personnel are able to systematically search on the information collected and stored in the ARRS database. Personnel will also use the information to address internal and/or external requests for information regarding grant progress, preliminary findings, and other requests, such as Freedom of Information Act requests, and producing responses related to federally mandated programs and regulations.

## ***3. Use of Improved Information Technology***

The ARRS employs state of the art technology that is aligned with e-government “share in services principle” whereby federal agencies achieve savings through the provision of technologies that improve or accelerate their work. In addition, the ARRS infrastructure increases the agency’s compliance with the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA) by further enabling a “paperless” working environment and enables the agency to comply with e-government initiatives as reported on the PMA Scorecard.

The ARRS supports the timely collection of important information related to the life cycle of a grant and contracts. This information includes: significant changes in project goals, methods, study design, sample or subjects, interventions, evaluation, dissemination, training, and key personnel; key preliminary findings; significant problems and resolutions; publications and presentations; tools and products; and new collaborations/partnerships with AHRQ grantees, vendors or others conducting related research.

#### ***4. Efforts to Identify Duplication***

There are no systems within the Agency collecting the same information.

#### ***5. Involvement of Small Entities***

We anticipate little or no impact on small business or other small entities. The ARRS is intended for use by AHRQ personnel, grantees, and vendors. The grantees and vendors submit a progress report on a quarterly basis which are reviewed by AHRQ personnel. Grantees and vendors are instructed to submit only relevant information for the monthly or quarterly reporting period and to skip those questions that are not applicable. The information requested has been held to the absolute minimum required for AHRQ use.

#### ***6. Consequences if Information Collected Less Frequently***

Collecting the monthly or quarterly report data less frequently prohibits the Agency from capturing important information related to the life cycle of a grant or contract. Furthermore, the Agency would be unable to have the up-to-date information required to effectively respond to requests for information and to monitor the monthly contract progress report or quarterly progress of a grant.

#### ***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***

As required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), notice was published in the Federal Register on page 12562, volume 85, Number 42, March 3, 2020, and allowed 60 days for public comment (see Attachment A). AHRQ did not receive comments from the public during this period.

##### ***8.b. Outside Consultations***

Joint meetings with representatives of the ACTION Network and the Patient Safety and Health Information Technology centers at the agency are held on a quarterly basis to discuss requirements and ongoing use of the reporting instrument. End users of the system are included in these meetings via Web based teleconferencing to voice opinions and make suggestions related to content, format, update methods including frequency and prior period use, and instructions for use. These results are used to develop change requests that are vetted through coordinating center personnel and project officers at the agency to establish requirements and system enhancements that are used to development

subsequent releases of the system to satisfy immediate and long term goals of the program, end users and AHRQ Management. Currently, there are no outstanding issues that require immediate attention or resolution of differences related to data or content requested in the reporting instrument.

**9. Payments/Gifts to Respondents**

Respondents do not receive remuneration for submitting the monthly or quarterly progress report. This process is currently voluntary and grantees/vendors are not required to complete the monthly/quarterly progress report form.

**10. Assurance of Confidentiality**

Grantees and vendors 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.

**11. Questions of a Sensitive Nature**

No questions of a sensitive nature are anticipated under this clearance.

**12. Estimates of Annualized Burden Hours and Costs**

Exhibit 1 shows the estimated annualized burden hours for the respondents. It will take grantees an estimated 15 minutes to enter the necessary data into the ARRS System and reporting will occur four times annually. The total annualized burden hours are estimated to be 500 hours.

Exhibit 2 shows the estimated annualized cost burden for the respondents. The total estimated cost burden for respondents is \$20,105.

**Exhibit 1 Estimated annualized burden hours**

Form Name	Number of Respondents	Number of responses per respondent	Hours per response	Total Burden hours
Data entry into ARRS	500	4	15/60	500
<b>Total</b>	500	N/A	N/A	500

**Exhibit 2 Estimated annualized cost burden**

Form Name	Number of Respondents	Total Burden hours	Average Hourly Wage Rate*	Total Cost Burden
Data entry into ARRS	500	500	40.21	\$20,105
<b>Total</b>	500	500	N/A	\$20,105

\*Based upon the average wages for Healthcare Practitioner and Technical Occupations (29-0000), “National Compensation Survey: Occupational Wages in the United States, May 2019,” U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, [http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes\\_nat.htm#29-0000](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm#29-0000).

### **13. Estimates of Annualized Respondent Capital and Maintenance Costs**

Capital and maintenance costs include the purchase of equipment, computers or computer software or services, or storage facilities for records, as a result of complying with this data collection. There are no direct costs to grantees other than their time to enter data into the ARRS.

### **14. Estimates of Annualized Cost to the Government**

The ARRS data is reviewed and approved by the designated AHRQ Project Officer that monitors the program. The average hourly salary for the position of Medical Officer, General Health Science, and Social Science at the GS-15-Step 10 grade level is \$81.84 per hour. The average hourly salary for the position of Medical Officer, General Health Science, and Social Science at the GS-14-Step 9 grade level is \$73.63 per hour. The average hourly salary for the position of Management and Program Analysis at the GS-12-Step 3 grade level is \$44.13 per hour. The estimated annual cost to the federal government is \$9,112.44 The Federal hourly salary information is available on the OPM web site at [https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/20Tables/html/DCB\\_h.aspx](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/20Tables/html/DCB_h.aspx)

ARRS System Total Reviewers and GS Grade and Level	Total Reviews	Estimated Review Time	Estimated Hourly Federal Salary	Total Cost Burden
13 @ GS15/10	225	15/60	\$81.84	\$4,603.50
9@ GS14/9	200	15/60	\$73.63	\$3,681.50
1@ GS12/3	75	15/60	\$44.13	\$827.44
<b>23</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>\$9,112.44</b>

### **15. Changes in Hour Burden**

There are no changes in burden hours

### **16. Time Schedule, Publication and Analysis Plans**

There are no plans for tabulation or publication of results from this information collection.

### **17. Exemption for Display of Expiration Date**

AHRQ does not seek this exemption.

### **List of Attachments:**

- Attachment A: Federal Register Notice
- Attachment B: ARRS Instructions
- Attachment C: List of Grants

- Attachment D: List of Contracts