

SUPPORTING STATEMENT B

Fellowship Management System (FMS)

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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 Fellowship Management System (FMS) is used to collect information from applicants that is needed to match them with appropriate fellowship opportunities (e.g., skills, interests, and qualifications), as well as information needed for application selection and program administration. Currently, eight programs use FMS:

1. Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS);
2. Epidemiology Elective Program (EEP)
3. CDC Steven M. Teutsch Prevention Effectiveness (PE) Fellowship
4. Public Health Associate Program (PHAP)
5. Public Health Informatics Fellowship Program (PHIFP)
6. Science Ambassador Fellowship (SAF)
7. Preventive Medicine Residency and Fellowship (PMR/F)
8. Population Health Training in Place Program (PH-TIPP)

Three programs will be added upon approval of this Revision request:

9. CDC E-learning Institute (ELI),
10. Laboratory Leadership Service (LLS), and
11. Future Leaders in Infectious and Global health Threats (FLIGHT).

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; individuals who provide references for fellowship applicants (e.g., former professors, supervisors, mentors, and deans of academic institutions where the applicant attended school); alumni of the fellowship programs; and employees of public health agencies who will submit host site assignment proposals to and serve as supervisors in the fellowship programs. 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

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 solicit 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.

In the proposed revision, the FMS technology platform will be updated and a new component for activity tracking (Attachment 6, FMS Activity Tracking Module) is going to be added to FMS. This will allow field supervisors the ability to contribute written feedback of the fellows’ learning assessments directly into the system. A new group of respondents (applicant references) will be asked to provide standardized data collection and submit letters of recommendation that speak to the applicants’ academic performance, skills, expertise, and work experience as part of the application module (Attachment 3, FMS Application Module). The host site module (Attachment 5, FMS Host Site Module) will now include fellowship programs that seek to receive host site assignments from nine or more nonfederal host site applicants.

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. This was validated in subsequent years when the ICR was revised or extended. For this revision we conducted pilot testing with CDC employees and nine non-federal employees from the target audience to validate how long it would take to complete the fellowship application, inputting assignment proposal data, learning assessments, and the alumni directory. Testers 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 feedback, the burden hours have been updated. 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 voluntarily provide more information than observed in previous years. The pilot tests of the FMS Application Module, FMS Host Site Module, FMS Alumni Module, and FMS Activity Tracking Module provided the estimates for the burden tables in Section 12.

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.