**Supporting Statement**
**Information Collection Request for NSF's**
**Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) Format**
**Submitted by**
**The National Science Foundation**


# A. <u>JUSTIFICATION</u>

## 1. CIRCUMSTANCES MAKING COLLECTION OF INFORMATION NECESSARY

The RPPR is a uniform format implemented by federal agencies for use in the reporting of performance progress on Federally funded research and research-related projects.  The RPPR resulted from an initiative of Research Business Models (RBM), an Interagency Working Group of the Social, Behavioral & Economic Research Subcommittee of the Committee on Science (CoS), a committee of the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC).  The original version of the RPPR format was approved for implementation in the Federal Register (FR) [Volume 75, pages 1816-1819, January 13, 2010].

The Research Performance Progress Report (RPPR) directly benefits award recipients by making it easier for them to administer Federal grant and cooperative agreement programs through standardization of the types of information required in interim performance reports—thereby reducing their administrative effort and costs.  The RPPR also makes it easier to compare the outputs, outcomes, etc. of research programs across the government.

Given the increasing complexity of interdisciplinary and interagency research, it is important for Federal agencies to manage awards in a similar fashion.  The RPPR does not change the performance reporting requirements specified in 2 CFR § 200.328; it merely provides additional clarification, instructions, and a standard format for collecting the information.

The National Science Foundation originally received approval for the RPPR in 2012 and has continued the renewal process every three years.

## 2. HOW, BY WHOM, AND PURPOSE FOR WHICH INFORMATION IS TO BE USED

Each category in the RPPR is a separate reporting component.  Recipients report on the one mandatory component ("Accomplishments") and other components as appropriate.  Current NSF-specific components include Products, Participants/Organizations, Impact, Changes/Problems, and Special Requirements.  Recipients will not be required or expected to report on each

of the questions or items listed under a particular category.  Recipients are advised to state "Nothing to Report" if they have nothing significant to report during the reporting period.

The RBM Subcommittee is undertaking development of a final Research Performance Progress Report format upon completion of the interim RPPR exercise.  The RPPR addresses progress for the most recently completed period, at the frequency required or designated by the sponsoring agency.

Potential respondents include public or private institutions, such as universities, colleges, hospitals, and laboratories; units of state and local government; domestic or foreign non-profit and for-profit organizations; and eligible agencies of the Federal government.

## 3. **USE OF AUTOMATION**

NSF awardees prepare, submit and review project reports through the use of Research.gov.  Research.gov is a modernization of the FastLane system that provides next generation grants management capabilities to carry out NSF and partner agencies' research missions by enabling organizations and grantees to access a menu of grants management services for multiple Federal agencies in one location.

## 4. **EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY DUPLICATION**

The RPPR is used by agencies that support research and research-related activities for use in submission of interim progress reports.  It is intended to replace other interim performance reporting formats currently in use by agencies.

## 5. **SMALL BUSINESS CONSIDERATIONS**

Not applicable.

## 6. **CONSEQUENCES OF LESS FREQUENT COLLECTION**

Not applicable.

## 7. **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR COLLECTION**

There are no special circumstances for this collection.

## 8. **FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE/OUTSIDE CONSULTATION**

A 60-day notice for public comment was published in the Federal Register on May 23, 2022, at 87 FR 31268, and no comments were received.

## 9. **GIFTS OR REMUNERATION**

Not applicable.

## 10. **CONFIDENTIALITY PROVIDED TO RESPONDENTS**

Collection of information will be consistent with OMB policies related to the administration of Federal grants as well as agency policies and practices for access to electronic and paper records.  If progress reports are submitted through the Research.gov report submission mechanism, Research.gov will maintain only transmission records pertaining to the files.  Information concerning the reviewers/panelists is maintained in accordance with the requirement of the Privacy Act of 1974, and is collected by the authority of the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended.

## 11. **QUESTIONS OF A SENSITIVE NATURE**

Demographic information requested is based on government-wide standard categories currently in use on a variety of forms, and would only pertain to the people who have directly worked on the award.   Submission of such data is voluntary.  The demographic data will be used for data analysis and reporting; it will not be used as part of the progress report evaluation.   The data will be collected, maintained, and used in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, and any other applicable OMB and agency policies and practices.

Agencies use demographic data for statistical purposes, primarily to help:
• Gauge whether programs and other opportunities are fairly reaching and benefiting everyone regardless of demographic category;
• Ensure that those in under-represented groups have the same knowledge of and access to programs, meetings, vacancies, and other research and educational opportunities as everyone else;
• Gauge and report performance in promoting partnerships and collaborations;
• Assess involvement of international investigators or students in work supported;
• Track the evolution of changing science, technology, engineering and mathematics
(STEM) fields at different points in the pipeline (e.g., medicine and law demographics have recently changed dramatically);
• Raise investigator and agency staff awareness of the involvement of under-represented groups in research;
• Encourage the development of creative approaches for tapping into the full spectrum of talent of the STEM workforce;

- Respond to external requests for data of this nature from a variety of sources, including NAS, Congress, etc.; and
- Respond to legislatively required analysis of workforce dynamics. Legislation requires at least one agency to routinely estimate scientific workforce needs. This analysis is accomplished through reviewing demographic data submitted for the existing workforce.

Below is a summary of what is included for the request for personal information:

   The Foundation is committed to monitor and identify any real or apparent inequities based on gender, race, ethnicity, or handicap of the reporting principal investigator(s)/project director(s) or the co-principal investigator(s)/co-project director(s). Although submission of these data is voluntary, we strongly urge all proposers to provide it so that the quality of the database can be improved.
   This demographic data allows NSF to gauge whether our programs and other opportunities in science and technology are fairly reaching and benefiting everyone regardless of demographic category; to ensure that those in under-represented groups have the same knowledge of and access to programs and other research and educational opportunities; and to assess involvement of international investigators in work supported by NSF.
   **Gender:** Male, Female, Do not wish to provide
   **Ethnicity:** Hispanic or Latino, Not-Hispanic or not-Latino, Do not wish to provide
   **Race** (select one or more): American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, White, Do not wish to provide
   **Disability Status:** Hearing Impairment, (select one or more) Visual Impairment, Mobility/Orthopedic Impairment, Other (Specify), None, Do not wish to provide

## 12. ESTIMATE OF BURDEN

It should be noted that burden estimates associated with forms currently in use range from a minimum of two hours to a maximum of 16 hours, depending on the type of research project being supported.  The estimated number of annual progress reports for NSF is 25,000, at an average of five hours per respondent, for a total of 125,000 hours.

## ANNUALIZED COST TO RESPONDENTS

The average salary estimate for a Principal Investigator is $41.93 per hour, and at five hours of response time, the average annual cost is $5,241,250.

(This data is from the BLS website:
https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/naics4_611300.htm and
https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes250000.htm)

## 13.   CAPITAL/STARTUP COSTS

There are no capital or startup costs to respondents.

## 14.   ANNUALIZED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Grants administrative personnel who review progress and final grant reports generally are in the GS-14 and GS-15 salary ranges.  Based on a step one average of these grades (OPM General Schedule Pay Table for 2019), an average hourly salary is $50 per hour.  It is further estimated that about an hour of time is needed to review a progress report, leading to a $1,250,000 estimated annual cost to the Federal Government.

## 15.   CHANGES IN BURDEN

There is no change in burden from the last review.

## 16.   PUBLICATION OF COLLECTION

Not applicable.

## 17.   SEEKING APPROVAL TO NOT DISPLAY OMB EXPIRATION DATE

Not applicable because the OMB number and expiration date will be included on the data collection.

## 18.   EXCEPTION(S) TO THE CERTIFICATION STATEMENT (19) ON OMB 83-I

Not applicable.


## B. STATISTICAL METHODS

No statistical methods are employed in this information collection.