

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Application for Appointment in the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps
OMB Control No. 0648-0047

SUPPORTING STATEMENT PART A

Abstract

This request is for revision and extension of an existing information collection. Minor revisions to NOAA Form 56-42 are requested in order to be more representative of the current NOAA Commissioned Corps. These revisions include clarifying instructions, adding aviation assignments to an essay question, and updating several questions.

Justification

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Commissioned Officer Corps (NOAA Corps) is the uniformed service of NOAA, a bureau of the Department of Commerce. The NOAA Corps provides a cadre of professionals trained in engineering, earth sciences, oceanography, meteorology, fisheries science, and other related disciplines who serve their country by supporting NOAA's mission of surveying the Earth's oceans, coasts, and atmosphere to ensure the economic and physical well-being of the Nation.

The statutory authorities for this information collection are [33 USC Chapter 43](#), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps and [PL 112-166 Section 2. \(gg\)\(1\)](#), Presidential Appointment Efficiency and Streamlining Act of 2011. NOAA Corps officers serve under Presidentially-confirmed appointments. The current authorized end-strength of the NOAA Corps is 500 commissioned officers on the active duty list. Officers may resign their commissions, or may request voluntary retirement when eligible. Each resignation or retirement creates a vacancy on the list of active duty officers.

The collection of appropriate personal, educational, and professional qualifications information is critical in order to identify those applicants with the educational background, intelligence, high moral standards, and strong leadership potential required to serve the Nation as a member of this uniformed service. Persons wishing to be considered for a NOAA Corps Commission must submit a complete application package, including NOAA Form 56-42, three to five letters of recommendation, resume, and official transcripts. A personal interview must also be conducted. Eligibility requirements include a bachelor's degree with at least 48 credit hours of science, engineering, or other disciplines related to NOAA's missions, excellent health and normal color vision with uncorrected visual acuity no worse than 20/400 in each eye (correctable to 20/20).

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

Application information may be submitted on a year-round basis, but the primary periods of collection are immediately preceding summer and winter college graduations. This information is used by the NOAA Commissioned Personnel Center to assess whether an applicant meets or exceeds the statutory minimum appointment qualifications and other legal obligations of citizenship. Completed applications are examined by the NOAA Officer Personnel Board in order to rate and/or assess the level of qualification, suitability, and availability of candidates for appointment.

The two forms (application, 56-42, and reference, 56-42A) are now fully electronic, the result of efforts to reduce paperwork, clarify the collection process, and improve the quality of applicant responses.

The NOAA Corps Commissioned Personnel Center will retain control over the information and safeguard it from improper access, modification, and destruction, consistent with NOAA standards for confidentiality, privacy, and electronic information. See response to Question 10 of this Supporting Statement for more information on confidentiality and privacy. The information collection is designed to yield data that meet all applicable information quality guidelines. Although the information collected is not expected to be disseminated directly to the public, results may be used in scientific, management, technical or general informational publications. Should the Director, NOAA Corps, decide to disseminate the information, it will be subject to the quality control measures and pre-dissemination review pursuant to [Section 515 of Public Law 106-554](#).

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also, describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

The primary means of information gathering is through an electronic application process, with the applicant entering data online (<https://www.oma.noaa.gov/noaa-corps/apply-now>). Paper forms are available upon request.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Question 2

This is an application that is unique to NOAA and there is no duplication with other efforts.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

This collection of information does not involve any small business or other small entities.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The information collected is used for identifying both minimum eligibility and level of qualification of applicants for the NOAA Corps. Reducing the frequency of collection or eliminating the collection would severely hinder the ability of the NOAA Corps to recruit officer candidates with the educational background, intelligence, high moral standards, and strong leadership potential required to serve the Nation as a member of this uniformed service.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted

in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

This collection will be collected in a manner consistent with OMB guidelines.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publications in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

A *Federal Register* Notice published on August 10, 2023 (88 FR 54304), solicited public comment on this collection. No comments were received.

NOAA Corps reached out to six new candidates to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported. No comments were received.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No payments or gifts will be provided to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy. If the collection requires a systems of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.

This information collection is a Privacy Act Systems of Records, [COMMERCE/NOAA-1, Applicants for the NOAA Corps. The Privacy Act of 1974](#), 5 U.S.C. § 552a, is the statutory authority for confidentiality of this information collection, and assurance of confidentiality citing this authority is provided on the information collection forms. A current Privacy Impact Assessment for NOAA2200 is on file.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

No questions of a sensitive nature are asked.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

Information Collection	Type of Respondent (e.g., Occupational Title)	# of Respondents/ year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Burden Hrs / Response (d)	Total Annual Burden Hrs (e) = (c) x (d)	Hourly Wage Rate (for Type of Respondent) (f)	Total Annual Wage Burden Costs (g) = (e) x (f)
Application for Commission & Interview	Individual	300	1	300	7	2100	\$27.07	\$56,847.00
References	Individual	1500	1	1500	.25	375	\$27.07	\$10,151.25
Totals				1800		2475		\$66,998.25

*The mean hourly wage rate for All Occupations (00-0000) was used since applicants could either be students (unemployed) or a lower to mid-level employee. The same wage rate was used for the individuals providing references since they could be from any occupation.

<https://www.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm>

13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected on the burden worksheet).

Information Collection	# of Respondents/year (a)	Annual # of Responses / Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Cost Burden / Respondent (h)	Total Annual Cost Burden (i) = (c) x (h)
Application for Commission	300	1	300	\$0	\$21,000.00
References	1500	5	1500	\$0	\$870.00
TOTALS			1800		\$21,870.00

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

Cost Descriptions	Grade/Step	Loaded Salary /Cost	% of Effort	Fringe (if Applicable)	Total Cost to Government
Federal Personnel	GS-9 (x2)	\$111,375 (x2)	25% (x2)		\$55,687.50
Other Federal Positions	GS-7 (x12)	\$90,055 (x12)	7% (x12)		\$75,646.20
Contractor Cost					
Travel					\$10,000.00
Other Costs:					
TOTAL					\$141,333.70

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in ROCIS.

Minor revisions to NOAA Form 56-42 are requested in order to be more representative of the current NOAA Commissioned Corps. These revisions include clarifying instructions, adding aviation assignments to an essay question, and updating several questions. There are no changes to the burden for this information collection.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

This collection will not be published.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

The agency plans to display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection on all instruments.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in “Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions.”

The agency certifies compliance with [5 CFR 1320.9](#) and the related provisions of [5 CFR 1320.8\(b\)\(3\)](#).