

## Supporting Statement

### Standardized Work Plan (SWP) Form for Use with Applications to the Bureau of Health Workforce (BHW) Research and Training Grants and Cooperative Agreements

OMB No. 0906-0049 - Extension

Terms of Clearance: None

#### A. Justification

##### 1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

HRSA is submitting this information collection extension request to OMB for review/approval to extend the Standardized Work Plan (SWP) Form for Use with Applications to the Bureau of Health Workforce (BHW) Research and Training Grants and Cooperative Agreements.

This information collection is necessary to evaluate applications for financial assistance and determine the relative merits of the projects for which such assistance is requested, as set forth in Sections 796 and 802 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. §§ 295n-1, 296a). The SWP succinctly captures all required work plan information in an objective manner allowing reviewers to analyze critical project elements.

*This extension includes the Quarterly Progress Update (QPU) and SWP with no additional changes. The QPU information collection is necessary to evaluate whether projects' goals are being advanced or achieved, as set forth in 45 C.F.R. § 75.342. The QPU is delivered and completed via HRSA's Electronic Handbooks (EHBs) and prompts recipients to report on progress of activities that were submitted using the SWP in the original application allowing government officials to efficiently analyze progress of grant and cooperative agreement project elements.*

*The QPU is an efficient way to document progress towards grant activities and identify areas where targeted support may be needed. The QPU is used to systematically report on the progress of projects through a standardized form that assists with the evaluation of programs throughout implementation, provides targeted program assistance where needed to achieve project goals, and identifies whether that support has been effective.*

## **2. Purpose and Use of Information Collection**

While the SWP is only utilized once during the grant application process, the QPU is used four times per year to assist project officers with their quarterly grantee progress checks. Information to be collected in the QPU is used by BHW to assist in determining if an awardee is meeting the goals and objectives set forth in their application via the SWP. The QPU assists federal officers with project progress and risk assessment for future awards. The QPU serves as a monitoring and evaluation tool that requires awardees to report quarterly whether their proposed project activities are being met. The QPU is used by BHW project officers and staff throughout the grant period to compare projected objectives and activities against concrete accomplishments in order to assess grantees' progress.

## **3. Use of Improved Information Technology and Burden Reduction**

Every effort was taken to design the tools to collect the least amount of data needed to systematically evaluate progress for BHW programs. The QPU was developed after a comprehensive overview of program monitoring procedures and techniques to identify a streamlined, consistent approach to collect the necessary data. Use of the QPU ensures all progress updates are systematically documented and allows for efficient and continuous progress assessments, specifically when portfolios shift among federal officers. This has resulted in reduced burden on awardees and project officers who previously communicated about progress at different intervals, frequencies, and document in different formats while ensuring all necessary program monitoring requirements are met. Awardees are required to submit this standardized QPU form electronically and quarterly through HRSA's EHBs, an award and program management system used by HRSA and its award recipients. This new utilization of both the SWP and QPU has been highly successful with both awardees and project officers to efficiently review progress on grants. As such, the Bureau is requesting an extension.

## **4. Efforts to Identify Duplication and Use of Similar Information**

BHW reviewed existing information collection instruments during development and determined there were no existing forms that could meet BHW's data collection needs. The current system of both the SWP during application and QPU during quarterly updates has been rated as more favorable and efficient by government project officers. Project officers also reported that grantees informally reported that they also prefer this system as it keeps reporting to a minimum and makes quarterly check-ins more efficient. The QPU form has also been successful, per project officers, with identification of programs that are off track and need additional prompt technical assistance.

**5. Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities**

No small businesses will be involved.

**6. Consequences of Collecting the Information Less Frequently**

After an award is made, the QPU is required quarterly and assists with assessing the grant or cooperative agreement's progress on activities previously proposed in the SWP during the application phase. Information collected quarterly is compared with overall project goals and activities, allowing for real-time progress assessments throughout the length of the award period. Quarterly progress updates were standard operating procedure before the implementation of the SWP and QPU; thus, frequency of project officer check-ins did not change.

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

All guidelines relating to 5 CFR § 1320.5 are met. The request fully complies with the regulation. There are no special circumstances requiring these collections to be conducted in any manner.

**8. Comments in Response to the Federal Register Notice/Outside Consultation**

A 60-day Federal Register Notice was published in the Federal Register on August 25, 2023, Vol. 88, No. 164, pp.58284-58285. A 30-day Federal Register Notice was published in the Federal Register on November 3, 2023, Vol. 88, No. 212, pp. 75604-05.

In addition to the *Federal Register* notice, HRSA conducted extensive internal review and requirements gathering with 25 federal staff to determine appropriate collection items that mirrored current BHW program requirements. Project officer, supervisor, and project manager participants conducted ongoing reviews from August 21, 2023 - September 1, 2023. The feedback consistently noted that the SWP concisely and objectively records all needed work plan information, allowing reviewers to examine critical project features.

**9. Explanation of any Payment/Gift to Respondents**

Respondents will not receive any payments or gifts.

**10. Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents**

The information collected will be kept secure and protected. Information containing personal identifiers will not be requested. Data will be kept private to the extent allowed by law.

**11. Justification for Sensitive Questions**

This is not applicable. No information of a sensitive nature is requested in the SWP or QPU.

**12. Estimates of Annualized Hour and Cost Burden**

**12A.** The following is the hour burden estimate for this information collection request. As part of the program’s NOFO, most programs require that applicants describe the activities, timeframes, deliverables, and key partners that will be required during the grant period of performance to address the needs described in the NOFO Purpose and Need section.

Form Name	Number of Respondents	Number of Responses per Respondent	Total Responses	Average Burden per Response (in hours)	Total Annual Burden Hours
Standardized Work Plan (SWP)	1,000	1	1,000	1	1,000
Quarterly Progress Update (QPU) Form	1,000	4	4,000	.10	400
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,000<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,400</b>

<sup>1</sup> The 1,000 Standardized Work Plan (SWP) respondents reflects the number of new grant applications submitted annually. The 1,000 Quarterly Progress Update (QPU) respondents reflects the current volume of funded, active grants.

**12B.** Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 1400

**Estimated Annualized Burden Costs**

Type of Respondent	Total Burden Hours	Hourly Wage Rate (x2)	Total Respondent Costs
Grant Recipients	1,400	\$91.70 <sup>1</sup>	\$128,380.00
Total	1,400		\$128,380.00

**13. Estimates of other Total Annual Cost Burden to Respondents or Recordkeepers/Capital Costs**

Other than their time, there is no cost to respondents.

**14. Annualized Cost to Federal Government**

An estimated 0.1 FTE at the GS 11 Step 9 level is needed to serve as the coordinator for data evaluation and to provide technical assistance to grantees regarding the data collection process and subsequent evaluation at an estimated cost of \$14,931.90 annually. <sup>2</sup>

**15. Explanation for Program Changes or Adjustments**

1 The annualized burden costs for recipients is based on the May 2022 National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates (for Project Management Specialists) by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes131082.htm>. The median hourly wage of \$45.85 has been multiplied by 2 to account for overhead costs.

2 <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2023/DCB.pdf>. The cost of 0.1 FTE at the GS 11, Step 9 level is \$9,954.60, which was multiplied by 1.5 to account for overhead costs.

The current burden inventory is 1,400 hours and this request is for 1,400 hours. There are no proposed changes.

**16. Plans for Tabulation, Publication, and Project Time Schedule**

The QPU form is made available on HRSA's EHBs, an award and program management system used by HRSA and its award recipients. This extension maintains the current schedule with no changes.

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

The OMB number and Expiration date will be displayed on every page of every form/instrument.

**18. Exceptions to Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions**

There are no exceptions to the certification.