

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Baldrige Executive Fellows Program
OMB Control No. 0693-0076

SUPPORTING STATEMENT PART A

Abstract

Executives voluntarily apply to this one-year fellowship for an in-depth study on leadership challenges and best practices using the Baldrige Excellence Framework as a foundation. The fellowship includes visits to U.S. role-model organizations, peer fellowship and executive coaching, and capstone projects to improve/innovate aspects of Fellows' own organizations. Capstone projects have focused on supplier management, the voice of the customer, public/population health, patient/workforce safety, acquisitions, higher education mapped to employer needs, cybersecurity, and strategic planning, among other topics. This data collection enables executives to apply for the program by submitting their resumes, organization charts, references, and competitor information (to ensure a confidential experience).

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 Baldrige Performance Excellence Program will seek applicants for the Baldrige Executive Fellows Program, a one-year, leadership development experience for direct reports to the most senior leader in an organization or business unit leaders. Using the Baldrige Excellence Framework as a foundation, the program will discuss impactful leadership through visits to Baldrige Award recipient sites and senior leaders, virtual discussions, and face-to-face peer training using an adult learning model. Fellows will discuss how to achieve performance excellence for their own organizations, stimulate innovation, and build the knowledge and capabilities necessary for organizational sustainability. Fellows will create a capstone project that tackles an issue of strategic importance in their own organizations. The program will be aligned with the Baldrige Program mission to improve the competitiveness and performance of U.S. organizations for the benefit of all U.S. residents. The collected information is needed to make selection decisions that are based on (1) sector mix, (2) appropriate level within the organization, (3) likelihood to follow through, and (4) no direct competitors with participating award recipients or other Fellows.

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.

The information will be collected and used once per year to make selection decisions for that year's cohort of Baldrige Executive Fellows. Because of the personally identifiable information (PII) requested, the information is solicited via secure file sharing (i.e., the Department of Commerce's secure file collaboration "Kiteworks"). The information will be seen and shared by the government staff members (one to two people) who receive the information and collate it for the Baldrige Director and occasionally the Baldrige Director Emeritus, who volunteers his time to support the current director. The information may also be seen by the executive secretary to the Baldrige Director who secures the director's signature for selection letters. This information will be kept secure and will never be released to the public—with the exception of the Fellows' names for promotional purposes and with their permission.

The collection and dissemination of information complies with the NIST Chief Information Officer (CIO) Information Quality Guidelines and Standards.

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.

Applications for the Baldrige Executive Fellows will be solicited on the Baldrige/NIST website. The following information will be requested:

1. A resumé, including e-mail, postal address, and telephone contact information; and the name and e-mail address of an assistant or alternate contact person
2. An organizational chart that includes names and titles showing the applicant's position within the organization
3. A recommendation letter from the applicant's highest-ranking official showing the organization's support of his/her participation in the program
4. A list of key competitors (in order that the Baldrige Program may avoid creating a cohort that would be unable to share effectively due to competitive situations)

Applicants will be asked to request a secure link to electronically send their submissions. A link to the secure file collaboration system would then be sent to them.

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 Item 2 above.

There is no duplication or repetitive information requested of applicants since the information is unique. The information would be specific to the applicant and therefore would unlikely be

available from any other source. The requested information should provide the specific detailed information to allow an appropriate selection decision to be made.

The Fellows Program, including selection process, will be evaluated annually so that it can be continuously improved.

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

Senior leaders of small businesses will be welcomed to apply for the Fellows Program—as all types of senior leaders will be welcomed. Small business senior leaders will be subject to the same selection criteria as other applicants; they need only gather the requested information, which is of a personal/professional nature and does not involve the writing of essays or other time-intensive questionnaires. The application to be a Fellow will be strictly voluntary. Therefore, the burden would fall only on those individuals who choose to submit an application.

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.

Consequences to the Federal program of not collecting the voluntary information (i.e., soliciting applications) include the lost opportunity for the Baldrige Program to offer this Executive Fellows program, which has been suggested, researched, developed, and tested by the Baldrige Board of Overseers, the Federal advisory body for the Baldrige Program. Research suggests that many executives would be interested in the program, which directly supports the Baldrige mission to improve the competitiveness of U.S. organizations, and leverages Public Law 100-107 that calls for Baldrige Award recipients to share best practices to help improve the U.S. economy. Much market research has also been gathered from executives who want the chance to learn more about the Baldrige Excellence Framework in an executive development setting and about Baldrige Award recipients and how they have achieved excellence; this type of training program involves content that is unique to the Baldrige Program and could not be offered by any other. Since the Baldrige Executive Fellows Program has been offered in 2011, the program has often been oversubscribed and several executives are offered to be on a wait list each year; therefore, there is demand from U.S. executives for this program to help them improve their organizations.

Research has suggested that executives want such a program in order to be engaged with the Baldrige Program and other senior leaders who can depend on one another to solicit feedback, learn from a wealth of executive experience, and address challenges within their own organizations—even after the year-long fellowship has ended. Another benefit of the program that would be lost is the cross-sector learning (i.e., the Baldrige Program brings together executives from business, health care, education, and nonprofit organizations) that many senior leaders value.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner: requiring respondents to report information to the agency more

often than quarterly; requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it; requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document; requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract; grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years; in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study; requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB; that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

No special circumstances exist.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication 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. Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years - even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

A 60-Day Federal Register Notice soliciting public comment was published on October 4, 2024 (Volume 89, No. 193, pages 80888-80889). No comments were received.

A 30-Day Federal Register Notice to solicit public comments was published on Friday, March 7, 2025, on page 11514-11515, Vol. 90, No. 44.

In regards to consultation with those from whom information is to be obtained, the fellowship is a face-to-face experience with five in-person meetings and four or more virtual meetings during the year. Baldrige Executive Fellows staff members are in contact with those who apply and participate in the program on a personal and ongoing manner throughout the year; Baldrige staff members also serve as executive coaches for the Fellows. Staff members are usually in contact with executives' assistants or alternate contact members as well.

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 given 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.

PII such as name is collected in this IC. Data are retrieved by a personal identifier; therefore, this is a Privacy Act System of Records. A Privacy Act Statement is provided on the instrument and an appropriate SORN is uploaded as a supplementary document.

Applicants will be assured of confidentiality as a matter of agency policy—such assurance can be found in the codes of conduct that both Fellows and Baldrige staff sign. All submission packages, including the names of those leaders who are not selected, will be kept confidential. A secure file-sharing protocol, never standard e-mail, will be used if there is a need to send PII, and only staff members who are in a need-to-know position will learn that the leader has even applied to be a Fellow. The assurance that no personal or organizational information of private individuals will be made public is made on the basis of the exemption under the Freedom of Information Act for proprietary information provided by a business to a government.

As part of the Fellows code of conduct (which was created in collaboration with NIST legal counsel), Fellows will be guided by four principles intended to enhance the sharing and learning of all parties: integrity, professional conduct, confidentiality, and respect for intellectual property. In promoting high standards of ethical conduct, they

- conduct themselves professionally, guided by truth, accuracy, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all their interactions
- avoid discussions or actions that might lead to, or imply an interest in, restraint of trade: market or customer allocation schemes, price fixing, dealing arrangements, bid rigging, bribery, or misappropriation
- avoid sharing information that their organizations consider proprietary and protect the confidential information of others
- in any sharing exchange, be willing to provide the same level of information that they request

All Baldrige staff members receive annual confidentiality training.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and 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.

This information collection will not include questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

Applicants will be asked to provide a list of their organization's key competitors so that the Baldrige Program may avoid creating a cohort that would be unable to share effectively due to

competitive situations.

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

Our estimate of the total burden of the collection of information is 24 hours for ~24 applicants. The applicant need only to gather information for the collection. The Fellows program cap will be 18 Fellows selected per year to ensure a small enough group for dialogue and no fewer than 8 to ensure a large enough group for dialogue. Twenty-four applications received is an estimate.

The total estimated number of Fellows applicants is ~24

The total estimated annual burden hours requested is 24 hours (or 1 hour per applicant).

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).

\$0

Fellows' applicants will need to gather information to submit.

14. Provide estimates of annualized costs 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. Agencies may also aggregate cost estimates from Items 12, 13, and 14 in a single table.

Staff members may spend up to 24 hours per year (1 hour per applicant) to collect, collate, send acknowledgements, read, and make decisions based on the information collected at an estimated annual cost of \$1,344.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported on the burden worksheet.

There are no changes or adjustments to 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.

There will be no plans for publishing the results of the collected information.

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 collection instrument will display the OMB Control# and expiration date along with the following notwithstanding statement.

OMB Control #0693-0076

Expiration Date: 3-31-2025

A Federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with an information collection subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 unless the information collection has a currently valid OMB Control Number. The approved OMB Control Number for this information collection is 0693-0076. Without this approval, we could not conduct this information collection. Public reporting for this information collection is estimated to be approximately 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the information collection. All responses to this information collection are voluntary. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection, including suggestions for reducing this burden to the National Institute of Standards and Technology at 100 Bureau Drive, Gaithersburg, MD 20899, Attn: Robert Fangmeyer, Director, Baldrige Program, robert.fangmeyer@nist.gov.

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

There are no exceptions.