

National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
U.S. Department of Agriculture
NIFA Reporting System (NRS)
OMB No. 0524-0036

A. JUSTIFICATION

1. CIRCUMSTANCES MAKING COLLECTION OF INFORMATION NECESSARY

The NIFA Reporting System (NRS) is a web-based information collection comprised of six modules. The NRS information collection is necessary to ensure that NIFA is satisfying the legislative reporting requirements for capacity grant funded research and extension programs. NIFA is requesting to renew the information collection and also revise it to include three new reporting modules, for a total of six modules. The three new modules are being imported from the currently approved REEport information collection (0524-0048, expiration date August 31, 2024). Specifically, the Financial Report for Programs/Projects, the Project/Program Initiation, and the Project/Program Results modules. NIFA is moving these three modules to NRS because the reporting covered by those modules is tied to the capacity project information in NRS. Having all the reporting associated with those capacity projects in the same system streamlines the process to keep it consistent for users and reduces potential errors that might happen due to having the information in more than one system. Additionally capacity projects have reporting needs that REEport could not cover without major changes to the system.

NIFA is also requesting to include a new OGFMS Supplemental module. Finally, NIFA is requesting to include a new field in the Project/Program Results module reports to request digital persistent identifiers, and to allow respondents to provide information on Co-Project Director(s) when applicable. Data for capacity projects will be imported into NRS and no longer stored in REEport. Previously entered capacity project data will remain in REEport unchanged and no further capacity data will be added or edited therein. The requested revisions will allow NIFA to comply with updated reporting requirements found in NSPM-33 and revised Departmental Regulations (DR 1020-006).

NIFA administers several capacity-funded research and extension programs at 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions, schools of forestry, and schools of veterinary medicine. The legislation that authorizes these programs includes reporting requirements for each NIFA-funded capacity program. The reporting requirements are found in the following pieces of legislation: the Hatch Act of 1887 (7 U.S.C. 361a, et seq.), the McIntire-Stennis Act (16 U.S.C. 582a, et seq.), the National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3222), animal health and disease research funds (7 U.S.C. 3195(a)), the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 343(b) and (c)), the District of Columbia Public Postsecondary Reorganization Act (P.L. 93-471), the Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 1671, et seq.), and NARETPA (7 U.S.C. 3221).

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

NIFA's office of Planning, Accountability and Reporting Staff (PARS) and program staff of scientific experts utilize the NRS reports in this collection to ensure that grantees are complying with legislative reporting requirements. NIFA program officials will also provide feedback to the institutions on their Plans of Work and Annual Reports of Accomplishments and Results in order for institutions to improve the conduct and the delivery of their programs.

The revised NRS will include the following report modules:

Project/Program Initiation. All universities and colleges that receive capacity funding completes the Project/Program Initiation module each time the institution uses capacity funds to perform work and activities not already covered by a previous entry in NRS. This module is currently part of the REEport information collection, and allows institutions to enter information that will provide the foundation for the Project/Program Results module described below. No revisions are being made to this form.

Project/Program Results. All universities and colleges that receive capacity funding are required to complete the Project/Program Results module. Once per year, institutions must submit results for each individual research project and extension program that is active during any time within the fiscal year. The Results form is currently part of the REEport information collection, and aligns with the federal-wide reporting standards for federally funded research projects. NIFA is requesting to revise this form to include separate fields for project/program products and associated digital persistent identifiers, description/citation and author fields, as well as a certification statement confirming compliance with [USDA Departmental Regulation \(DR\) 1020-006](#).

Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results. The Annual Report of Accomplishments module is completed only by 1862 and 1890 Land Grant Universities, and allows these institutions to report accomplishments that were supported by capacity funding from the previous fiscal year. The module includes an Executive Summary, which provides an opportunity to give an overview by critical issue of any significant achievements or challenges. Updates to the Merit and Scientific Peer Review process and a summary of Stakeholder Input activities are also included in this module. No revisions are being made to this form.

Plan of Work (POW). The Plan of Work module is completed only by 1862 and 1890 Land Grant Universities, and asks respondents to describe critical food and agricultural issues in the State, related programs and projects, programs and projects related to those issues. Updates to the Merit and Scientific Peer Review process and a summary of Stakeholder Input activities are also included in this module. No revisions are being made to this form.

Financial Report for Projects/Programs. All universities and colleges that receive capacity funding are required to complete the Financial Report for Projects/Programs

module. Currently, the Financial Report module is included in REEport, and requires respondents to detail all expenditures by funding source, as well as all Full Time Equivalents (FTEs), for the most recently completed fiscal year. The NRS version of the financial report will include minor revisions to allow institutions to better differentiate between research and extension work performed using capacity funds.

OGFM Supplemental Module. NIFA is requesting to include a new OGFM Supplemental Module in NRS. The module will be completed only by 1862 Land Grant Universities and will allow them to report certain required expenditures for Hatch Act and Smith-Lever Act grant funds.

3. USE OF IMPROVED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

NIFA makes every effort to comply with the E-Government Act, 2002 (E-Gov) and to provide for alternative submission of information collections. Prior to the implementation of NRS, capacity grant recipients used two separate applications (REEport and the Institutional Profile system) to provide information to NIFA about use of capacity grant funds. The revised NRS system will continue to utilize modular technology and microservices, to import or export information from other applications, which minimizes the need for recipient institutions to input information into multiple applications.

In addition to streamlining the Plan of Work, NRS contains a report builder that compiles the Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results for each state and institution using project- and program-level results. The builder organizes the annual reports by institution, critical issue, funding type, and other reporting requirements.

The NRS also meets USDA Office of the Chief Information Officer's (OCIO) security standards and supports the OCIO's strategic objectives. Users of the system must register in eAuthentication and verify their identities online or at an authorized USDA office.

NRS, and the information therein, is currently available only to those institutions' directors and their representatives who have been granted access. NRS may be accessed via <https://nrs.nifa.usda.gov/>; all responses will be collected electronically.

4. EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY DUPLICATION

No duplication is involved. There is no similar information available which can be used or modified to meet the information needs of this program. Fields were included in NRS only if they were required by law or regulation or fulfilled an informational need by NIFA or its partners.

5. METHODS TO MINIMIZE BUDGET OF SMALL BUSINESSES OR ENTITIES

The respondents do not include any small businesses or entities therefore this information collection will have no impact on small businesses or small entities.

6. CONSEQUENCE IF INFORMATION COLLECTION WERE LESS FREQUENT

This is a mandatory, ongoing information collection request. Legislation requires that respondents update the Plan of Work and the Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results annually. These updates are needed on an annual basis to ensure that agricultural research and extension capacity funds are being expended on critical agricultural issues in the States; that the stakeholder input and program review processes are implemented; and that those institutions are directing a portion of their capacity funds, as specified by law, to multistate and integrated research and extension activities. If the data and information is not collected, NIFA would be in violation of the mandates required by said legislation.

7. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES FOR INFORMATION COLLECTION

- **Requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly:**

The agency does not require respondents to report information more often than quarterly.

- **Requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt:**

The agency does not require respondents to prepare a written response to this collection in fewer than 30 days after receipt.

- **Requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document:**

The agency does not require 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:**

This collection does not require 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:**

This collection does not include a statistical survey component.

- **Requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB:**

This information collection does not require the use of 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:**

This information collection does not require a pledge of confidentiality.

- **Requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, 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:**

This information collection does not require respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information.

There are no special circumstances. The collection of information is conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

8. FEDERAL REGISTER NOTICE

The notice of this currently approved information collection appeared in the Federal Register on Thursday, August 31, 2023, Vol. 88, No. 168 (88 FR 60173). Two comments were received. NIFA has reviewed the comments and has taken the commenter input into consideration. No specific changes to the collection were made in response to the comments.

CONSULTATIONS WITH PERSONS OUTSIDE THE AGENCY

NIFA sought consultation outside the agency from a geographically diverse selection from the pool of NRS users, including both 1890 and 1862 land-grant universities.

Responses were received from the following individuals:

Crystal Clark, Project Administrator and Finance Specialist
Cornell Agricultural Experiment Station
Cornell University
Email: cdo6@cornell.edu

Suzanne Smalley, Data Manager, Accountability & Reporting
College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences
University of Georgia
Email: ssmalley@uga.edu

Jennifer McLaughlin, Administrative Assistant
Office of Research and Graduate Education
Penn State University
Email: jem73@psu.edu

Ishara Rijal, Agricultural Research Program Coordinator
North Carolina A&T University
Email: irijal@ncat.edu

Steven Young-Uhk, Director of Cooperative Research and Extension
College of Micronesia
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Adeola Ogunade, Evaluation Specialist
Research and Evaluation Office
West Virginia University
Email: adeola.ogunade@mail.wvu.edu

Previous input from stakeholders and users drove the creation of enhancements such as the OGFMS Supplemental Module as well as the efficiency of having all the data in one location (NRS). As the NRS system continues to develop, NIFA continues to receive feedback on a rolling basis. This feedback has led to the consolidation of software systems in one place (NRS).

9. DECISION TO PROVIDE ANY PAYMENT OR GIFT TO RESPONDENTS, OTHER THAN REMUNERATION OF CONTRACTORS OR GRANTEES

The agency does not provide payment or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY PROVIDED TO RESPONDENTS

There is no data that will be released. The information in this collection is available only to NIFA staff to ensure that grantees are complying with legislative reporting requirements.

11. QUESTIONS OF A SENSITIVE NATURE

No sensitive information or potentially sensitive information is being collected.

12. ESTIMATE OF BURDEN

The estimated burden hours for each NRS form listed below is based on a sample survey of NRS respondents. The estimates are summarized in Table 1 and Table 2 below.

NRS – Data Collection Hour Burden Estimates
Table 1

Form Description	Estimated Number of Respondents	Estimated Number of Responses Per Respondent	Estimated Total Annual Responses	Estimated Hours/Response	Estimated Annual Burden Hrs.
Plan of Work	75	1	75	36.60	2,745
Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results	75	1	75	65.00	4,875
Project/Program Initiation	100	20	2000	9.30	18,600
Project/Program Results	100	85	8500	8.75	74,375
Financial Report for Projects/Programs	100	85	8500	8.40	71,400
OGFM Supplemental Form	51	1	51	9.20	469
Total	100	193	19,201	137.25	172,464

NRS - Annualized Respondent Cost based on Data Collection Hour Burden Estimates
Table 2

Form Description	Avg. Hourly Wage*	Avg. Hours/Response	Total	Total Responses/Year	Annual Cost Burden
Plan of Work	\$50.92	36.60	\$1,864.00	75	\$139,775.00
Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results	\$50.92	65	\$3,310.00	75	\$248,250.00
Project/Program Initiation	\$50.92	9.30	\$474.00	2000	\$948,000.00
Project/Program Results	\$50.92	8.75	\$446.00	8500	\$3,791,000.00

Form Description	Avg. Hourly Wage*	Avg. Hours/Response	Total	Total Responses/Year	Annual Cost Burden
Financial Report for Projects/Programs	\$34.11	8.40	\$287.00	8500	\$2,439,500.00
OGFM Supplemental Form	\$34.11	9.20	\$314.00	51	\$16,014.00
<i>Total</i>					<i>\$7,582,539.00</i>

ANNUALIZED COSTS TO RESPONDENTS

*Hourly labor rate for the Plan of Work, Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results, Project/Program Initiation, and Project/Program Results are derived from BLS.gov Postsecondary Teacher 2022 Median Pay. Hourly labor rate for the Financial Report for Projects/Programs and OGFM Supplemental Form is derived from BLS.gov Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks 2022 Median Pay. These estimates accounts for the cost of fringe benefits for the respondents.

13. **CAPITAL/STARTUP COSTS**

There are no capital or startup costs.

14. **ANNUALIZED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

The annualized cost of the NIFA support staff is detailed in Table 3 below. The approximate annualized cost of the support staff hours is \$227,260.00. In addition to these costs, the information collected in NRS is reviewed by NIFA staff after respondents submit the report forms in the system. Table 4 details the estimated annualized cost of these report form reviews, which equals \$54,190.00 annually. The total estimated annualized cost to the federal government is \$281,450.00.

NRS – Annualized Cost to the Federal Government for Support Staff
Table 3

Support Staff Role	Average Staff GS Level	Hours/Year	Avg. Hourly Wage*	Total Yearly Cost
IT Specialist	GS13	690	\$54.26	\$37,439.00
Program Analyst	GS12	4,160	\$45.63	\$189,820.00
<i>Total</i>				<i>\$227,260.00</i>

*Avg. Hourly Wage derived from 2023 Federal Pay Tables for Kansas City-Overland Park-Kansas City, MO-KS assuming a step 5 annual salary for the GS level listed. The GS13/5 represents the average IT Specialist GS Level and the GS12/5 represents the average Program Analyst GS Level.

NRS – Annualized Cost to the Federal Government for Report Form Reviews
Table 4

Form Description	Total Annual Responses	Average Staff GS Level	Avg. Review Hours/Form	Avg. Hourly Wage*	Total Yearly Cost
Plan of Work	75	GS 14	4.00	\$64.12	\$19,236.00
Annual Report of Accomplishments and Results	75	GS 14	4.00	\$64.12	\$19,236.00
Project/Program Initiation	100	GS 14	1.00	\$64.12	\$6,412.00
Project/Program Results	100	GS 14	1.00	\$64.12	\$6,412.00
Financial Report for Projects/Programs	100	GS 11	0.25	\$38.07	\$952.00
OGFM Supplemental Form	51	GS 11	1.00	\$38.07	\$1,942.00
<i>Total</i>					<i>\$54,190.00</i>

*Avg. Hourly Wage derived from 2023 Federal Pay Tables for Kansas City-Overland Park-Kansas City, MO-KS assuming each a step 5 annual salary for each GS level listed. The GS14/5 represents the average National Program Leader GS level and the GS11/5 represents the average Grants Management Specialist GS level.

15. REASONS FOR CHANGE IN BURDEN

The currently approved burden estimates are 150 estimated total annual responses and 24,300 estimated total burden hours. The total burden for this collection has increased from 24,300 hours to 172,464 hours, for a total increase of 148,164 hours. This increase reflects the addition of reporting modules that are currently included in the REEport information collection (i.e., the Project/Program Initiation, Project/Program Results, and Financial Module). The estimated time needed to complete these modules has not increased, but these hours were not included in the previous NRS burden estimate as these modules were not part of NRS. The increase is also due to the addition of the new OGFM Supplemental module.

Changes in the burden estimate are also due to variations in responses on estimated times for collections as determined by survey responses for capacity grant reporting. Previous burden estimates were calculated using information that related to both capacity and competitive grant reporting, and the increased burden reflect the fact that capacity grant reporting often requires more coordination, consultation, and time than similar reporting for competitive grants.

16. TABULATION, ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION PLANS

NIFA does not currently plan to publish any reports using the information in this collection.

17. SEEKING APPROVAL TO NOT DISPLAY OMB APPROVAL ON FORMS

The Agency is not seeking approval to not display the expiration date of OMB approval of the information collection.

18. EXCEPTION(S) TO THE CERTIFICATION STATEMENT (19) ON OMB 83-1

None.