

Supporting Statement A

Health Resources and Services Administration Rural Health Network Development Planning Program Performance Improvement and Measurement System (PIMS)

OMB Control No. 0915-0384

Terms of Clearance: None

A. Justification

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

The Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) is requesting OMB approval to collect information on grantee activities and on extension of current performance measures electronically through the HRSA Electronic Handbook (EHB). The EHB is a web-based portal that grantees use to submit information to HRSA. The Rural Health Network Development Planning Program (Network Planning) Performance Measures form is a tool that allows FORHP to measure the impact of the grant funding. These measures last received OMB review and approval under OMB Number 0915-0384 and have a current expiration date of June 30, 2023.

This current information collection request is a revision to the previously approved measures:

- Form #1: 'Rural Health Network Development Planning Program Performance Improvement and Measurement System Form' – there is an increase in the number of respondents from 21 to 23.
- Form #2: 'EHE Rural Health Network Development Planning Program Performance Improvement and Measurement System Form' – this form is no longer active so the number of respondents has changed from 10 to 0 (the EHE Network Planning program ended in 2021).

The total number of respondents for this information collection request has changed from 31 respondents to 23 respondents.

In its authorizing language (SEC. 711. [42 U.S.C. 912]), Congress charged FORHP with

“administering grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts to provide technical assistance and other activities as necessary to support activities related to improving health care in rural areas.” FORHP’s mission is to improve access to quality health care in rural communities.

This activity will collect information for the Network Planning Program. The Network Planning Program is authorized by Section 330A(f) of the Public Health Service Act, 42 U.S.C. 254c (f), as amended by section 201, P.L. 107-251 of the Health Care Safety Net Amendments of 2002. The purpose of the Network Planning program is to assist in the development of an integrated health care network, specifically for entities that do not have a history of formal collaborative efforts. Health care networks can be an effective strategy to help smaller rural health care providers and health care service organizations align resources, achieve economies of scale and efficiency, and address challenges more effectively as a group than as single providers. The Network Planning program promotes the planning and development of healthcare networks in order to: (i) achieve efficiencies; (ii) expand access to, coordinate, and improve the quality of essential health care services; and (iii) strengthen the rural health care system as a whole. The Network Planning Performance Improvement and Measurement System (PIMS) is the reporting system for the Network Planning Program grantees. PIMS is a tool that allows FORHP to measure the impact of the grant funding.

2. Purpose and Use of Information Collection

FORHP conducts annual data collection of user information for the Network Planning Program. The purpose of this data collection is to provide HRSA with information on how well each grantee is meeting the needs of implementing network planning and development activities in a rural setting.

Data is proposed to be collected annually to provide quantitative information about the programs, specifically the characteristics of: a) network infrastructure, b) network collaboration, c) sustainability, and d) network assessment.

This assessment will provide useful information on the Network Planning program and will enable HRSA to assess the success of the program. It will also ensure that funded organizations have demonstrated a need for further partnership development and collaboration in their communities and those federal funds are being effectively used to meet those needs.

The type of information requested in the Network Planning PIMS enables FORHP to assess the following characteristics about its programs:

- The types and number of organizations in the consortium or network.
- The types of collaboration and/or integration among the network members.
- The contribution by network members and the network’s sustainability efforts.
- The network’s assessment of effectiveness during the project period.

The HRSA EHB is capable of identifying and responding to the needs of the grantees that receive Network Planning Program funding. The EHB:

- Provides uniformly defined data for major FORHP grant programs.
- Facilitates the electronic transmission of data by the grantees, through use of standard formats and definitions.

3. Use of Improved Information Technology and Burden Reduction

This activity is fully electronic. Data will be collected through and maintained in a database in the HRSA EHB. The EHB is a website that all HRSA grantees, including those for the Network Planning program, are required to use when applying electronically for grants using OMB approved Standard Forms. Grantees can email or call EHB staff for help with the website. As this database is fully electronic, burden is reduced for the grantee and program staff. The time burden is minimal, since there is no data entry element for program staff due to the electronic transmission from grantee systems to EHB; additionally, there is less chance of error in translating data and analysis of the data.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication and Use of Similar Information

There is no other data source available that tracks the network planning in rural areas.

5. Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities

Every effort has been made to ensure the data requested is data that is currently being collected by the projects or can be easily incorporated into normal project procedures. Data being requested by projects is useful in determining whether grantee goals and objectives are being met. The data collection activities will not have a significant impact on small entities.

6. Consequences of Collecting the Information Less Frequently

It is proposed that respondents will respond to this data collection on an annual basis. This information is needed by the program, FORHP and HRSA in order to measure effective use of grant dollars to report on progress toward strategic goals and objectives

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

This request fully complies with the regulation.

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

Section 8A:

A 60-day Federal Register Notice was published in the Federal Register on December 9, 2022, vol. 87, No. 236; pp. 75638-39. There were no public comments. A 30-day Federal Register Notice was published in the Federal Register on March 7, 2023, vol. 88, No. 44; pp. 14172-73. There was one public comment which was outside the scope of this information collection.

Section 8B:

Three individuals were consulted in January 2023 regarding the burden estimates for the Network Planning PIMS form.

9. Explanation of any Payment/Gift to Respondents

Respondents will not receive any payments or gifts.

10. Assurance of Confidentiality Provided to Respondents

The data system does not involve the reporting of information about identifiable individuals; therefore, the Privacy Act is not applicable to this activity. The proposed performance measures will be used only in aggregate data for program activities.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

There is no sensitive information collected for the Network Planning measures.

12. Estimates of Annualized Hour and Cost Burden

12A. Estimated Annualized Burden Hours

Type of Respondent	Form Name	No. of Respondents	No. Responses per Respondent	Average Burden per Response (in hours)	Total Burden Hours
Network Planning Grantee key personnel (Project Director)	Rural Health Network Development Planning Program Performance Improvement and Measurement System Form	23	1	1	23
Total		23			23

These estimates were determined by consultations with three (3) current grantees from the program. These grantees were sent a draft of the questions that pertain to their program. They were asked to estimate how much time it would take to answer the questions.

12B.

Estimated Annualized Burden Costs

Type of Respondent	Total Burden Hours	Hourly Wage Rate	Total Respondent Costs
Project Director	23	\$42.62	\$980.26
Total	23	\$42.62	\$980.26

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

Annual data collection for this program is expected to be carried out at a cost to the Federal Government of \$1,022.88. Staff at FORHP monitor the grants and provide guidance to grantee project staff at a cost of \$4,250.88 per year (72 hours per year at \$59.04 per hour at a GS-13, Step 4 salary level). The total annualized cost to the government for this project is \$5,273.76 (rounded up to \$5,274).

15. Explanation for Program Changes or Adjustments

The burden has not changed from the burden shown in the current inventory.

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

There are no plans to publish the data. The data may be used on an aggregate program level to document the impact and success of program. This information might be used in the FORHP Annual Report produced internally for the agency.

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.