

DRAFT SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
FOR  
NRC NUCLEAR EDUCATION GRANTEE SURVEY

(3150-XXXX)

NEW

Description of the Information Collection

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) Nuclear education grant program consists of four different programs: Curriculum Development; Scholarships; Fellowships; Trade Schools and Community Colleges; and Faculty Development. The program began in 2007 with Curriculum Development with a small Scholarship/Fellowship program and was expanded in 2008 to include Faculty Development and Trade Schools. Since 2007, annual funding for all program ranged between \$5 million and \$20 million.

**Nuclear Education Grant Program - Curricula Development**

As part of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) under the Nuclear Education Grant Program funds up to \$4.7 million in grants to institutions of higher education to support courses, studies, training, curricula, and disciplines pertaining to nuclear safety, security, or environmental protection, and any other fields that the Commission determines to be critical to the regulatory mission of the NRC. The primary purpose of this program is to support and develop the educational infrastructure necessary to allow the Nation to safely advance its nuclear energy initiatives.

**Nuclear Education Program - Scholarship and Fellowship**

Funding under this program includes support for education in nuclear science and engineering, to develop a workforce capable of supporting the design, construction, operation, and regulation of nuclear facilities and the safe handling of nuclear materials. NRC only awards grants directly to accredited U.S. institutions of higher education and does not award individual scholarships or fellowships. Individual students cannot apply directly to NRC for scholarships or fellowships. As a condition for receiving scholarships or fellowships, recipients must demonstrate satisfactory academic progress in their fields of study, as determined by criteria contained in this announcement and as established by the NRC. The nuclear education supported by this funding is intended to benefit the nuclear sector broadly. Consequently, NRC requires scholarship and fellowship recipients to serve 6 months in nuclear-related employment for each full or partial year of academic support.

**Nuclear Education Program - Faculty Development**

Funding under this opportunity includes support for education in nuclear science, engineering, and related trades to develop a workforce capable of the design, construction, operation, and regulation of nuclear facilities and the safe handling of nuclear materials. The Faculty Development Grants Program recognizes the need to attract and retain highly-qualified junior faculty in academic teaching careers. Funding under this announcement is intended to support new faculty in the nuclear-related fields of Nuclear Engineering, Health Physics, and Radiochemistry. The grants specifically target probationary, tenure-track faculty in these academic areas during the first 6 years of their career. Grants could include support for developing proposals for research and small amounts for initiating or continuing research projects in their areas of expertise. Other areas might include course development, equipment

stipends, participation in professional society meetings, preparation of papers, travel, and associated expenses. The program intends to provide support to enable new faculty to enhance their careers as professors and researchers in the University department where employed.

### **Nuclear Education Program - Trade School and Community College Scholarship**

Funding under this program includes support for education in nuclear science and engineering, to develop a workforce capable of supporting the design, construction, operation, and regulation of nuclear facilities and the safe handling of nuclear materials. NRC only awards grants directly to accredited Trade Schools and Community Colleges and does not award individual scholarships or fellowships. Individual students cannot apply directly to NRC for funding. As a condition for receiving trade school/community college scholarships, recipients must demonstrate satisfactory academic progress in their fields of study, as determined by criteria contained in this announcement and as established by the NRC. Trade schools must be postsecondary educational institutions or programs accredited by an accrediting agency or state approval agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education or be registered apprenticeship programs. The nuclear education supported by this funding is intended to benefit the nuclear sector broadly. Consequently, NRC requires trade school scholarship recipients to serve 6 months in nuclear-related employment for each full or partial year of academic support.

### **Grantee Survey**

The NRC seeks to conduct a survey of grantees funded between 2007 and 2011. The survey will allow the NRC to collect information that is not otherwise available from all grantees to assess the impact of these funds on grantee programs, their faculty, and their students.

The survey will consist of 38 generic questions to be completed by all grantees participating in the survey, followed by questions that are specific to each grant program. For example, the initial generic questions will identify the type of institution, the years of funding, the type of grant received, the amount of funding, and the number of students enrolled. Next, skip patterns will direct respondents to questions based on grant type. For example, grantees with curriculum development grants will provide information about the number and names of courses developed with grant funds, whereas grantees with scholarship grants will provide information about the number of scholarships funded with grant funds and the percentage who graduated with a nuclear-related degree. Grantees who received more than one type of grant will complete more than one section of grant-specific questions.

## **A. JUSTIFICATION**

### **1. Need For and Practical Utility of the Collection of Information**

The goal of the NRC education grant programs is to develop a workforce capable of supporting the design, construction, operation, and regulation of nuclear facilities and the safe handling of nuclear materials. The NRC approach to ensuring a capable workforce includes developing courses, studies, training, curricula, and disciplines pertaining to nuclear safety, security, or environmental protection; attracting and retaining highly qualified junior faculty in academic teaching careers; and offering educational support through scholarships and fellowships. The program evaluation will address the following key questions:

- To what extent are the NRC education grant programs developing a sufficient supply of qualified and diverse applicants to meet current and projected workforce needs in the nuclear industry (both private and public sectors)?
- To what extent are the NRC educational grant programs affecting enrollment in nuclear engineering and science, health physics, and radio-chemistry majors?
- To what extent are the NRC educational grant programs ensuring the continued conduct of research and development and training activities in nuclear-related fields?
- To what extent are the NRC educational grant programs supporting the NRC regulatory mission?
- To what extent are the NRC educational grant programs duplicating efforts, including duplication among grantees in the NRC programs and other Federal Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education grant programs?

## 2. Agency Use of Information

The NRC will use information from the evaluation to measure the impact of the education grants program on the nuclear workforce and nuclear-related training programs. The NRC does not currently have detailed data from grantees on the use of grant funds. The information will allow the NRC to assess the impact of the program and determine the extent to which the funding is being used to meet the goals of the program. Based on changing needs of the nuclear industry, the NRC may see that too much funding is being directed to programs that are no longer highly prioritized within the industry. For example, if skilled nuclear welders are no longer in demand in the industry, it would not make sense to fund multiple scholarships in this area. Another example is that the survey may indicate that too much funding is going towards Fellowships and not enough into Scholarships or Trade Schools and Community Colleges.

## 3. Reduction of Burden Through Information Technology

There are no legal obstacles to reducing the burden associated with this information collection. The NRC encourages respondents to use information technology when it would be beneficial to them. NRC issued a regulation on October 10, 2003 (68 FR 58791), consistent with the Government Paperwork Elimination Act, which allows its licensees, vendors, applicants, and members of the public the option to make submissions electronically via CD-ROM, e-mail, special Web-based interface, or other means. It is estimated that 100% of the potential responses are filed electronically. The survey will be administered as online survey to all grantees.

## 4. Effort to Identify Duplication and Use Similar Information

No sources of similar information are available. There is no duplication of requirements. NRC has in place an ongoing program to examine all information collections with the goal of eliminating all duplication and/or unnecessary information collections. The data gathered via this web survey is not included in the progress reports filed by grantees.

## 5. Effort to Reduce Small Business Burden

Not applicable. The grantees are all institutions of higher education and the principle investigator of the grant is expected to answer the survey. Individual students are not being solicited for comment.

6. Consequences to Federal Program or Policy Activities if the Collection Is Not Conducted or Is Conducted Less Frequently

The information collection is proposed as one-time effort. The NRC staff has determined that the best way to assess the impact of the grants in meeting the required goals is through direct feedback from grantees.

7. Circumstances Which Justify Variation from OMB Guidelines

Not Applicable

8. Consultations Outside the NRC

Opportunity for public comment on the information collection requirements for this clearance package has been published in the Federal Register.

9. Payment or Gift to Respondents

Not Applicable.

10. Confidentiality of Information

Confidential and proprietary information is protected in accordance with NRC regulations at 10 CFR 9.17(a) and 10 CFR 2.390(b). However, no information normally considered confidential or proprietary is requested.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

Not Applicable.

12. Estimated Burden and Burden Hour Cost

Between 2007-2011, over 310 NRC Nuclear Education grants were awarded, some of which were multiple awards to the same school<sup>1</sup>. Approximately 250 grantees will receive the invitation by email to voluntarily participate in an online survey. The survey will be conducted once during the three-year clearance period, and will be available for 3 weeks after initial contact. The expected response rate, based upon the response from the pilot survey, is approximately 75%.

The NRC staff estimates that of the 250 grantees contacted, 180 grantees will respond to the survey and that the survey will take 45 minutes (.75 hrs) to complete.

---

<sup>1</sup> 310 grantees have been funded through NRC Nuclear Education grants. Due to attrition (e.g., death, change in jobs), only 250 principal investigators are still at the institutions where the grants were funded. All 250 of these grantees will be contacted.

The total burden is therefore estimated to be 135 hours (180 grantees x .75 hrs = 135 hours. Annualized, the burden is 45 hours (135 hours divided by 3 years = 45 hrs). The total cost is estimated to be \$12,240 (45 hrs x \$272/hr), based on the NRC's annual fee rate.

13. Estimate of Other Additional Costs

There are no additional costs.

14. Estimated Annualized Cost to the Federal Government

The NRC solicited the services of The McKinley Group, an 8(a) contractor specializing in program evaluation and surveys. The total cost of the contract is \$200,000.

The staff estimates that the survey will require 100 hours of NRC professional staff time at a cost of \$272/hr, for a total of \$27,200 (100 hrs x \$272/hr). An additional two hours of clerical time will be required at a cost of \$47/hr, for a total of \$94 (2 hrs x \$47/hr).

The total cost to the Federal Government is estimated to be \$227,294 (\$200,000 + \$27,200 + \$94) to conduct the survey one time during the clearance period. Annualized, the cost to the Federal government is \$75,765 (\$227,294 / 3 yrs).

15. Reasons for Change in Burden or Cost

This is a new collection to conduct a survey of NRC education grantees to assess the effectiveness of the program in meeting the agency's goal to develop a workforce capable of supporting the design, construction, operation, and regulation of nuclear facilities and the safe handling of nuclear materials.

16. Publication for Statistical Use

Results will be published electronically on our web site and will also be made available in ADAMS.

17. Reason for Not Displaying the Expiration Date

The expiration date will be displayed.

18. Exceptions to the Certification Statement

None.