

will be sent to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review, as required by the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

**DATES:** Comments on this information collection must be submitted on or before April 16, 2018.

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments by email to Mr. Joel Schwartz, Chief Guidelines Officer, at [jschwartz@neh.gov](mailto:jschwartz@neh.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NEH will submit the proposed information collection to OMB for review, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104–13, 44 U.S.C. 35). This notice is soliciting comments from members of the public and affected agencies. NEH is particularly interested in comments which help the agency to: (1) Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (2) Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (3) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (4) Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of electronic submissions of responses.

This Notice also lists the following information:

*Title of Review:* Extension of a currently approved collection.

*Agency:* National Endowment for the Humanities.

*Title of Proposal:* Generic Clearance Authority for the National Endowment for the Humanities.

*OMB Number:* 3136–0134.

*Affected Public:* Applicants to NEH grant programs, reviewers of NEH grant applications, and NEH award recipients.

*Total Respondents:* 7,815.

*Frequency of Collection:* On occasion.

*Total Responses:* 7,815.

*Average Time per Response:* Varies according to type of information collection.

*Estimated Total Burden Hours:* 88,885 hours.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of the information collection request. These comments will also become a matter of public record.

**Jon Parrish Peede,**  
Senior Deputy Chairman.

[FR Doc. 2018–02941 Filed 2–13–18; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 7536–01–P**

## NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

### Notice of Intent To Seek Approval To Renew an Information Collection System

**AGENCY:** National Science Foundation.

**ACTION:** Notice and request for comments.

**SUMMARY:** Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, and as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, the National Science Foundation (NSF) is inviting the general public or other Federal agencies to comment on this proposed continuing information collection.

**DATES:** Written comments on this notice must be received by April 16, 2018, to be assured consideration. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable. Send comments to address below.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Suzanne H. Plimpton, Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation, 2415 Eisenhower Avenue, Suite W18200, Alexandria, Virginia 22314; telephone (703) 292–7556; or send email to [splimpto@nsf.gov](mailto:splimpto@nsf.gov). Individuals who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–800–877–8339, which is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year (including federal holidays).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

*Comments:* Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Foundation, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Foundation's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

*Title of Collection:* Engineering Program Monitoring Data Collections.

*OMB Number:* 3145–0238.

*Expiration Date of Approval:* April 30, 2018.

*Type of Request:* Intent to seek approval to renew an information collection for post-award output and outcome monitoring system.

*Abstract:*

*Proposed Project:* NSF provides nearly 20 percent of federal funding for

basic research to academic institutions.<sup>1</sup> Within NSF, the Directorate for Engineering (ENG) has primary responsibility for promoting the progress of engineering in the United States in order to enable the Nation's capacity to perform. Its investments in engineering research and education aim to build and strengthen a national capacity for innovation that can lead over time to the creation of new shared wealth and a better quality of life. Most NSF programs in engineering are funded through the Directorate for Engineering, which also sponsors the NSF's Industrial Innovation and Partnerships (IIP) Division. To these ends, ENG provides support for research and implementation activities that may meet national needs. While scientists seek to discover what is not yet known, engineers apply fundamental science to design and develop new devices and engineered systems to solve societal problems. ENG also focuses on broadening participation in engineering research and careers.

The Directorate for Engineering (ENG) requests of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) renewal of this clearance that will allow NSF–ENG to improve the rigor of our surveys for evaluations and program monitoring, as well as to initiate new data collections to monitor the immediate, intermediate and long-term outcomes of our investments by periodically surveying the grantees and their students involved in the research. The clearance will allow any program in the Directorate for Engineering at NSF to rigorously develop, test, and implement survey instruments and methodologies.

Some NSF–ENG programs regularly conduct a variety of data collection activities that include routine program monitoring, program evaluations, and education-related data collections from federally funded institutions of higher education. The primary objective of this clearance is to allow other programs in NSF–ENG to collect outcome and output data from grantees, their partners and students, which will enable the evaluation of the impact of its investments in engineering research over time. With that purpose, this clearance will allow us to use a bank of approved question items as needed as long as the resources consumed to do not exceed this request. The second related objective is to improve our questionnaires and/or data collection procedures through pilot tests and other survey methods used in these activities

<sup>1</sup> National Science Foundation. (2012). *NSF at a glance*. Retrieved from <http://www.nsf.gov/about/glance.jsp>.

for different programs. Under this clearance a variety of surveys could be pre-tested, modified and used. The exact combination of questions from the question bank is currently unknown for each program, but it will be based on their respective logic models and program goals. Following standard OMB requirements, NSF will submit to OMB an individual request for each survey project it undertakes under this clearance. NSF will request OMB approval in advance and provide OMB with a copy of the questionnaire (if one is used) and materials describing the project.

In doing so, this request seeks approval for multiple data collections that have similar elements and purposes and will provide essential information for program monitoring purposes through multiple possible methods of collection. Data collected by ENG program outcome monitoring systems will be used for program planning,

management, evaluation, and audit purposes. Summaries of output and outcome monitoring data are used to respond to queries from Congress, the public, NSF's external merit reviewers who serve as advisors, including Committees of Visitors (COVs), and NSF's Office of the Inspector General. These data are needed for effective administration, program and project monitoring, evaluation, strategic reviews and for measuring attainment of NSF's program and strategic goals, as identified by the President's Accountable Government Initiative, the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Modernization Act of 2010, and NSF's Strategic Plan.

Outcome and output monitoring data represented in this collection is complementary to the data collected in the RPPR both with respect to type of questions and indicators (content) and timeliness of the collection. All questions asked are questions that are

NOT included in the final or annual report and the intention is to ask them even beyond the period of performance on voluntary basis in order to capture impacts of the research that occur beyond the life of the award. Questionnaire items fall into the category of general items that could be used across programs as well as items of interest to a particular division. We are seeking to collect additional information from the grantees about the outcomes of their research that go above and beyond the standard reporting requirements used by the NSF and could span a period of up to 10 years after the award.

The six (6) divisions or offices in NSF-ENG which oversee multiple programs are included in this request. They are designed to assist in management of specific programs, divisions, or multi-agency initiatives and to serve as data resources for current and future program evaluations.

Program/Office	Type of program
Emerging Frontiers in Research and Innovation (EFRI) .....	Fundamental Research.
Engineering Education and Centers (EEC) .....	Large research center's research (Implementation & Development) & Research and Education.
Industrial Innovation and Partnerships (IIP) .....	Translational Research.
Chemical, Bioengineering, Environmental, and Transport Systems (CBET).	Fundamental Research.
Civil, Mechanical, and Manufacturing Innovation (CMMI) .....	Fundamental Research.
Electrical, Communications, and Cyber Systems (ECCS) .....	Fundamental Research.

ENG-funded projects could include research opportunities and mentoring for educators, scholars, and university students, as well as outreach programs that help stir the imagination of K-12 students, often with a focus on groups underrepresented in science and engineering. The surveys to be tested and implemented would be designed to assist in management of specific division programs, divisions, or multi-agency initiatives and to serve as data resources for current and future program evaluations.

This data collection effort will enable program officers to longitudinally monitor outputs and outcomes given the unique goals and purpose of their programs. This is very important to enable appropriate and accurate evidence-based management of the programs and to determine whether or not the specific goals of the programs are being met.

Grantees will be invited to submit this information on a periodic basis to support performance review and the management of ENG grants by ENG officers. Once the survey tool for a specific program is tested, ENG grantees will be invited to submit these indicators to NSF via data collection methods that include but are not limited to online surveys, interviews, focus groups, phone interviews, etc. These indicators are both quantitative and descriptive and may include, for example, the characteristics of project personnel and students; sources of complementary cash and in-kind support to the ENG project; characteristics of industrial and/or other sector participation; research activities; education activities; knowledge transfer activities; patents, licenses; publications; descriptions of significant advances and other outcomes of the ENG-funded effort.

*Use of the Information:* The data collected will be used for NSF internal reports, historical data, program level studies and evaluations, and for securing future funding for the ENG program maintenance and growth. These data could be used for program evaluation purposes if deemed necessary for a particular program. Evaluation designs could make use of metadata associated with the award, and other characteristics to identify a comparison group to evaluate the impact of the program funding and other interesting research questions. Different designs could be possible based on the research questions varying from program to program but the fact that NSF-ENG has already collected data on the outcomes of interest will result in substantial savings on the evaluation per se.

ESTIMATE OF BURDEN

Collection title	Number of respondents	Annual number of responses/ respondent	Annual hour burden
Emerging Frontiers in Research and Innovation (EFRI) .....	85	0.25	21.25
Civil, Mechanical, and Manufacturing Innovation (CMMI) .....	1,300	0.25	325
Chemical, Bioengineering, Environmental, and Transport Systems (CBET) .....	1,750	0.25	437.5
Electrical, Communications, and Cyber Systems (ECCS) .....	1,000	0.25	250
Engineering Education and Centers (EEC) .....	100	0.25	100
Industrial Innovation and Partnerships (IIP) .....	1,000	4	4,000
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>5,235</b>		<b>5,133.75</b>

Below is an example that shows how the hour burden was estimated for the monitoring system.

The estimated average number of annual respondents is 5,235, with an estimated annual response burden of 5,133.75 hours. For post-award monitoring systems, most divisions expect to collect data at 1, 2, 5, and 10 years post-award, in order to have the best chance of capturing the more immediate outcomes expected by 1–2 years post-award, intermediate outcomes at 5 years post-award, and long-term outcomes/impacts at 10 years post award. These four (4) data collections spread over the span of 10 years; this averages to 0.25 data collections/year. For the IIP division, many awards are made in translational

research, such that we might expect a shorter and more condensed timeline of outcomes and impacts. Thus, some programs may wish to collect data quarterly for the first two years of the award, and then once annually at 5 and 10 years post-award. The annual number of responses for the first 2 years post award is included in this table.

For life-of-award monitoring, the data collection burden to awardees will be limited to no more than 2 hours of the respondents' time in each instance.

*Respondents:* The respondents are either PIs or program coordinators. One PI or program coordinator per award completes the questionnaire.

*Estimates of Annualized Cost to Respondents for the Hour Burdens:* The overall annualized cost to the

respondents is estimated to be \$214,635. The following table shows the annualized estimate of costs to PI/program coordinator respondents, who are generally university professors. This estimated hourly rate is based on a report from the American Association of University Professors, "Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession, 2011–12," *Academe*, March–April 2012, Survey Report Table 4. According to this report, the average salary of an associate professor across all types of doctoral-granting institutions (public, private-independent, religiously affiliated) was \$86,319. When divided by the number of standard annual work hours (2,080), this calculates to approximately \$41 per hour.

Respondent type	Number of respondents	Burden hours per respondent	Average hourly rate	Estimated annual cost
PIs/Program Coordinators (EFRI, CBET, CMMI, ECCS, EEC) .....	4,235	0.25	\$41	\$173,635
PIs/Program Coordinators (IIP Division) .....	1,000	1	41	41,000
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>5,235</b>			<b>214,635</b>

*Estimated Number of Responses per Report:* Data collection for the

collections involves all awardees in the programs involved. The table below

shows the total universe and sample size for each of the collections.

RESPONDENT UNIVERSE AND SAMPLE SIZE OF ENG PROGRAM MONITORING CLEARANCE COLLECTIONS

Collection title	Universe of respondents	Sample size
Emerging Frontiers in Research and Innovation (EFRI) .....	85	85
Civil, Mechanical, and Manufacturing Innovation (CMMI) .....	1,300	1,300
Chemical, Bioengineering, Environmental, and Transport Systems (CBET) .....	1,750	1,750
Electrical, Communications, and Cyber Systems (ECCS) .....	1,000	1,000
Engineering Education and Centers (EEC) .....	100	100
Industrial Innovation and Partnerships (IIP) .....	1,000	1,000

Dated: February 9, 2018.

**Suzanne H. Plimpton,**

*Reports Clearance Officer, National Science Foundation.*

[FR Doc. 2018-03002 Filed 2-13-18; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7555-01-P

## NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[NRC-2018-0026]

### Very Low-Level Radioactive Waste Scoping Study

**AGENCY:** Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**ACTION:** Scoping study; public meeting and request for comment.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is conducting a very low-level radioactive waste (VLLW) scoping study to identify possible options to improve and strengthen the NRC's regulatory framework for the disposal of the anticipated large volumes of VLLW associated with the decommissioning of nuclear power plants and material sites, as well as waste that might be generated by alternative waste streams that may be created by operating reprocessing facilities or a radiological event. The NRC is seeking stakeholder input and perspectives on this action.

Respondents are asked to consider specific questions posed by the NRC staff and other Federal agencies in this notice when preparing their responses.

**DATES:** Submit comments by May 15, 2018. Comments received after this date will be considered if it is practical to do so, but the NRC is able to ensure consideration only for comments received on or before this date.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit comments by any of the following methods (unless this document describes a different method for submitting comments on a specific subject):

- *Federal Rulemaking website:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC-2018-0026. Address questions about NRC dockets to Jennifer Borges; telephone: 301-287-9127; email: [Jennifer.Borges@nrc.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Borges@nrc.gov). For technical questions, contact the individual listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this document.

- *Mail comments to:* May Ma, Office of Administration, Mail Stop: OWFN-2-A13, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001.

For additional direction on obtaining information and submitting comments,

see "Obtaining Information and Submitting Comments" in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this document.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Maurice Heath, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001; telephone: 301-415-3137; email: [Maurice.Heath@nrc.gov](mailto:Maurice.Heath@nrc.gov).

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### I. Obtaining Information and Submitting Comments

###### A. Obtaining Information

Please refer to Docket ID NRC-2018-0026 when contacting the NRC about the availability of information for this action. You may obtain publicly-available information related to this action by any of the following methods:

- *Federal Rulemaking website:* Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID NRC-2018-0026.
- *NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS):* You may obtain publicly-available documents online in the ADAMS Public Documents collection at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. To begin the search, select "ADAMS Public Documents" and then select "Begin Web-based ADAMS Search." For problems with ADAMS, please contact the NRC's Public Document Room (PDR) reference staff at 1-800-397-4209, 301-415-4737, or by email to [pdr.resource@nrc.gov](mailto:pdr.resource@nrc.gov). The ADAMS Accession Number for each document referenced (if it is available in ADAMS) is provided the first time that it is mentioned in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section.

- *NRC's PDR:* You may examine and purchase copies of public documents at the NRC's PDR, Room O1-F21, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

###### B. Submitting Comments

Please reference Docket ID NRC-2018-0026 in your comment submission. If your comment contains proprietary or sensitive information, please contact the individual listed in the **FOR INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this document to determine the most appropriate method for submitting your comment.

The NRC cautions you not to include identifying or contact information that you do not want to be publicly disclosed in your comment submission. All comment submissions are posted at <http://www.regulations.gov> and entered into ADAMS. The NRC does not routinely edit comment submissions to

remove identifying or contact information.

If you are requesting or aggregating comments from other persons for submission to the NRC, then you should inform those persons not to include identifying or contact information that they do not want to be publicly disclosed in their comment submission. Your request should state that the NRC does not routinely edit comment submissions to remove such information before making the comment submissions available to the public or entering the comment submissions into ADAMS.

##### II. Background

In 2007, following developments in the national program for Low-Level Radioactive Waste (LLRW) disposal, as well as changes in the regulatory environment, the NRC conducted a strategic assessment of its regulatory program for LLRW. The results of this assessment were published in late 2007 in SECY-07-0180, "Strategic Assessment of Low-Level Radioactive Waste Regulatory Program" (ADAMS Accession No. ML071350299). The strategic assessment identified the need to coordinate with other agencies on consistency in regulating LAW disposal and to develop guidance that summarizes disposition options for low-end materials and waste.

In 2016, the NRC staff conducted a programmatic assessment of the LLRW program to identify and prioritize tasks that the NRC could undertake to ensure a stable, reliable, and adaptable regulatory framework for effective LLRW management. The results of this assessment were published in October 2016, in SECY-16-0118, "Programmatic Assessment of Low-Level Radioactive Waste Regulatory Program" (ADAMS Accession No. ML15243A192). The programmatic assessment identified the need to perform a LAW scoping study as a medium priority.

In International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safety Guide No. GSG-1, "Classification of Radioactive Waste" ([http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/publications/PDF/Pub1419\\_web.pdf](http://www-pub.iaea.org/MTCD/publications/PDF/Pub1419_web.pdf)), the IAEA defines VLLW as waste that does not meet the criteria of exempt waste, but does not need a high level of containment and isolation, and, therefore, is suitable for disposal in a near surface landfill type facility with limited regulatory control. The NRC currently does not have a formal regulatory definition for VLLW, nor has it adopted the IAEA definition. However, the NRC uses the term VLLW consistent with the international regulatory structure. In general, the NRC