



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Agency Information Collection Activities: Comment Request; Grantee Reporting Requirements for Materials Research Science and Engineering Centers

AGENCY: National Science Foundation.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The National Science Foundation (NSF) is announcing plans to renew this collection. In accordance with the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, we are providing opportunity for public comment on this action. After obtaining and considering public comment, NSF will prepare the submission requesting Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance of this collection for no longer than 3 years.

DATES: Written comments on this notice must be received by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] 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. 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:

TITLE of COLLECTION: Grantee Reporting Requirements for Materials Research Science and Engineering Centers (MRSECs)

OMB Number: 3145-0230

Expiration Date of Approval: September 30, 2022.

Type of Request: Intent to seek approval to renew an information collection.

Overview of this Information Collection:

The Materials Research Science and Engineering Centers (MRSECs) Program supports innovation in interdisciplinary research, education, and knowledge transfer. MRSECs build intellectual and physical infrastructure within and between disciplines, weaving together knowledge creation, knowledge integration, and knowledge transfer. MRSECs conduct world-class research through partnerships of academic institutions, national laboratories, industrial organizations, and/or other public/private entities. New knowledge thus created is meaningfully linked to society.

MRSECs enable and foster excellent education, integrate research and education, and create bonds between learning and inquiry so that discovery and creativity more fully support the learning process. MRSECs capitalize on diversity through participation in center activities and demonstrate leadership in the involvement of groups underrepresented in science and engineering.

MRSECs are required to submit annual reports on progress and plans, which are used as a basis for performance review and determining the level of continued funding. To support this review and the management of a Center, MRSECs will be required to develop a set of management and performance indicators for submission annually to NSF via the Research Performance Project

Reporting module in Research.gov and an external technical assistance contractor that collects programmatic data electronically. These indicators are both quantitative and descriptive and may include, for example, the characteristics of center personnel and students; sources of financial support and in-kind support; expenditures by operational component; characteristics of industrial and/or other sector participation; research activities; education activities; knowledge transfer activities; patents, licenses; publications; degrees granted to students involved in Center activities; descriptions of significant advances and other outcomes of the MRSEC effort. Such reporting requirements are included in the cooperative agreement that is binding between the academic institution and NSF.

Each Center's annual report will address the following categories of activities: (1) research, (2) education, (3) knowledge transfer, (4) partnerships, (5) shared experimental facilities, (6) diversity, (7) management, and (8) budget issues.

For each of the categories the report will describe overall objectives for the year, problems the Center has encountered in making progress towards goals, anticipated problems in the following year, and specific outputs and outcomes.

MRSECs are required to file a final report through the RPPR and external technical assistance contractor. Final reports contain similar information and metrics as annual reports, effectively they constitute the last annual report; the Program Officer maintains a cumulative database with all relevant achievements and metrics.

Use of the Information: NSF will use the information to continue funding of the Centers, and to evaluate the progress of the program.

Estimate of Burden: 80 hours per center for 20 centers for a total of 1600 hours.

Respondents: Non-profit institutions.

Estimated Number of Responses per Report: One from each of the 20 MRSECs.

COMMENTS: Comments are invited on (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the Agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Dated: March 9, 2022.

Suzanne H. Plimpton,
Reports Clearance Officer,
National Science Foundation.