

Part B Supporting Statement
0920-0881 Data Calls for the Laboratory Response Network (LRN)
Expires 3/31/14

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B. Collections of Information Employing Statistical Methods

The Laboratory Response Network's (LRN) mission is to maintain an integrated national and international network of laboratories that can respond to suspected acts of biological, chemical, or radiological terrorism and other public health emergencies. This collection of information does not employ statistical methods.

When federal, state and local public health laboratories voluntarily join the LRN, they assume specific responsibilities and are required to provide information to the LRN Program Office at CDC. Twice a year, CDC may conduct a Special Data Call to obtain additional information from LRN laboratories regarding biological or chemical terrorism preparedness. Special Data Calls are conducted using email communications and survey tools (i.e. Survey Monkey).

The LRN has not had to use a generic 0920-0881 since 2009; however, it is important to indicate that a lack of use should not be a signal for a lack of need. Emerging infections and outbreaks are not predictable and the LRN program is requesting an extension for OMB 0920-0881 to perform critical data calls of LRN member laboratories should the circumstance arise. One instance, for example, would be for emergency deployment of a new assay. It's critical for the LRN to know which labs have equipment to support an agent specific assay during an emergency. Also, during the two years between Biennial Requalification, CDC may need to obtain additional information from the LRN laboratories to better understand or quantify the network's preparedness. Surveying participating labs during this time is critical. Collecting information through Special Data Calls is necessary for the CDC to make decisions. For example in 2009, we asked members via broadcast email how many facilities had a specific version of an instrument. The information was used to help the LRN program office determine if new procedures should be written and made available to members to support the instrument in question. Finally, while a generic has not been used since 2009, as the LRN begins to reframe and structure it's network in 2014, these calls are essential to collect information and consequently plan on the best way to carry out a strategic vision.

1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

Respondents include members of the Laboratory Response Network. Expected response rate as determined by previous data collections is 80% or better. No statistical methods are used to determine the sampling group for respondents.

2. Procedures for the Collection of Information

No statistical methods are employed for the collection of information. Individuals at the LRN Program will assess if data exists in current database on LRN website. If additional information is needed a questionnaire will be developed and method for distribution (i.e. email, survey tool) will be determined. An announcement will be sent to all members by email requesting their response to the special data call and detailed instructions on how and when to respond. LRN Program office will review data collected and contact members that have not responded as needed. Data will be compile and summarized and used internally at CDC for public health and program decisions.

3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Deal with No Response

If limited responses to a special data call are received from LRN member laboratories the LRN Program office at CDC will extend the deadline to respond and send another announcement of the data call and the need for the information by broadcast email. No responses after second announcement will be followed up by a maximum of two personal phone calls to the Lab Director of the LRN member laboratory.

4. Tests of Procedures or Methods to be Undertaken

If a tool such as Survey Monkey is used to collect data it will be tested by individuals within and external to CDC/LRN Program office to assure functionality exists and questions are clear. More extensive questionnaires may be piloted with 8-10 LRN member laboratories before requesting all members to respond.

5. Individuals Consulted on Statistical Aspects and Individuals Collecting and/or Analyzing Data

No individuals consulted are consulted on statistical aspects or the design of the data collection.