

Supporting Statement

Rural Outreach Benefits Counseling Measures Form

OMB Control No. 0906-XXXX

A. Justification

1. Circumstances Making the Collection of Information Necessary

The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)'s Federal Office of Rural Health Policy (FORHP) is requesting OMB approval to collect information on grantee activities and on new 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 Outreach Benefits Counseling Measures form is a tool that allows FORHP to measure the effect of the grant funding.

It should be noted that 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 sustain and improve access to quality health care services for rural communities.

This activity will collect information for the FY15 Rural Outreach Benefits Counseling (“Benefits Counseling”) program on an annual basis for three years. The Benefits Counseling program is authorized by Section 330A(e) of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act (42 U.S.C. 254c(e)), Public Law 113-76 as amended to “promote rural health care services outreach by expanding the delivery of health care services to include new and enhanced services in rural areas.” The purpose of the three-year Benefits Counseling Program is to expand outreach, education, and enrollment efforts to eligible uninsured individuals and families, and newly insured individuals and families in rural communities.

The overarching goal of this grant program is to coordinate and conduct innovative outreach activities through a strong consortium in order to: 1) identify and enroll uninsured individuals and families who are eligible for public health insurance such as Medicare, Medicaid, and Children’s Health Insurance Program; qualified health plans offered through Health Insurance Marketplaces; and/or private health insurance plans in rural communities; and, 2) educate the newly insured individuals in rural communities about their health insurance benefits, help connect them to primary care and preventive services to which they now have access, and help them retain their health insurance coverage.

2. Purpose and Use of Information Collection

FORHP will collect data for the FY15 Benefits Counseling program annually to provide HRSA with information on how well each grantee is improving access to quality health care services in rural communities. These measures cover the principal topic areas of interest to FORHP, including: (a) access to care; (b) population demographics; (c) staffing; (d) consortium/network; (e) sustainability; and (f) benefits counseling process and outcomes. Several measures will be used for the Benefits Counseling Program. All measures will speak to FORHP's progress toward meeting the goals set.

This assessment will provide useful information on the Benefits Counseling Program and will enable HRSA to assess the success of the grant funding. It will also ensure that funded organizations have demonstrated adequate outreach and service delivery activities in their communities and those federal funds are being effectively used to support and sustain health care services.

The type of information requested in the Benefits Counseling Program enables FORHP to assess the following characteristics:

- The number of individuals benefitting from the services provided by the grantees.
- The outcomes of Benefits Counseling services.
- The degree of sustainability by each grantee.

The HRSA EHB provides uniformly defined data for major FORHP grant programs and 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 as the EHB is the website that the Benefits Counseling Program grantees will use to submit their data. 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.

4. Efforts to Identify Duplication and Use of Similar Information

There is no other data source available that tracks the characteristics of rural entities that are doing outreach and service delivery activities.

5. Impact on Small Businesses or Other Small Entities

The data collection activities will not have a significant impact on small entities.

6. Consequences of Collecting the Information Less Frequently

Respondents will respond to this data collection annually during their three-year budget period. 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. There are no legal obstacles to reduce the burden.

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

This project is consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5.

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 June 1, 2015 (80 Fed. Reg. 31051). There were no comments.

Section 8B:

In order to create a final set of performance measures that are useful for the Benefits Counseling grantees, a set of measures were vetted to nine or less participating grantee organizations in June/July 2015. The following three grantees were consulted:

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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 form for program activities.

11. Justification for Sensitive Questions

Demographic data, such as race and ethnicity, will be collected only in aggregate form.

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
Rural Outreach Benefits Counseling Grantee (project director)	Rural Outreach Benefits Counseling Program Measures	10	1	2	20
Total		10	1	2	20

These estimates were determined by consultations with three (3) grantees from similar grant programs. 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	20	\$52.99	\$1,059.80
Total	20	\$52.99	\$1,059.80

Source of hourly wage rate: <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes119199.htm>

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 \$33,000 with an additional cost of \$3,309.12 per year (72 hours per year at \$45.96 per hour at a GS-13, Step 3 salary level) for staff at FORHP to monitor contracts and provide guidance to grantee project staff. The total annualized cost to the government for this project is \$36,309.12.

15. Explanation for Program Changes or Adjustments

This is a new information collection.

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 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.