

consideration. Comments on the proposed data collection plans and instruments may be directed to OMB at the following address: Office of Management and Budget, IRA, ATTN.: Jonathan Winer, New Executive Office Building, Room 3208, Washington, DC 20503.

Written comments should be received by May 3, 1996.

Abstract: This proposed collection will become a part of an integrated data system that will contain data for all programs managed by the NSF's Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR). Data will be used to support programs studies and evaluations and also for effective program assessments and evaluations throughout the Directorate.

The Advanced Technological Education (ATE) Program is a major effort by NSF to improve science, mathematics, engineering, and technology education or technicians being educated for the high performance workplace. The program was initiated in 1993 and has resulted thus far in three rounds of competition. Since the workshops are conducted at various sites across the country, a mechanism is needed to determine in a timely fashion when the workshops are actually conducted, their enrollment, the nature of the individuals who benefited, the characteristics of the activities, and professional expertise of the instructors.

A part of the on-going annual review, ATE projects which have faculty and teacher enhancement components are asked to provide, along with other documentation, responses to an annual program survey. This data collection format, the subject of the OMB Review Request, requests information on the numbers and types of teachers and faculty served by the ATE programs in workshops. It is the only instrument that is designed to collect comparable data from all ATA projects and Centers.

The data collection format address questions asked internally about the ATE Program by NSF program officers in their program planning and in conjunction with the development of the EHR Directorate Impact Database. It also addresses questions asked by the Congress and other interested parties. The ATE program will use these data to establish influence on faculty and teachers of the ATE program. It will also show other sources of income and support received by the project for faculty and teacher enhancement.

Respondents and burden hours: 70 respondents at approximately 30 minutes per response.

Dated: March 18, 1996.
Herman G. Fleming,
NSF Clearance Officer.
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NATIONAL SKILL STANDARDS BOARD

Request for Comments; Notice of Public Hearings

AGENCY: National Skill Standards Board.

ACTION: Request for comments; Notice of public hearings.

SUMMARY: This Notice is designed to: (1) Notify the public of the dates, locations, and times of public hearings to be held by the National Skill Standards Board (NSSB) around the country to solicit oral and written statements on the Board's work; and (2) solicit public comment on key questions the Board is addressing. This is the first of a series of public hearings to foster a public dialogue. The second series of hearings, tentatively scheduled for Summer 1996, will solicit public input on the future work of the Board, including the identification of occupational clusters. The Board will continue to use public hearings as a way to inform its decision-making.

DATES: A. *Hearing Dates:* The dates of the first set of public hearings are as follows:

Tuesday, April 9, 1996: Kansas City, MO

Thursday, April 11, 1996: Phoenix, AZ
Monday, April 15, 1996: Miami, FL

B. *Comment Dates for Public Hearings:* Comments and notices of intent to present oral and/or written statements at the hearings must be received 10 business days before the date of the hearing at which they will be presented. The requirements for comments are set forth in the "Supplementary Information" section below. We welcome responses to the Questions for Public Comment.

ADDRESSES: The locations of the three public hearings are as follows:

Kansas City: Kansas City Marriott
Downtown, 200 West 12th Street,
Kansas City, MO 64105, (816) 421-6800.

Phoenix: Crown Plaza Phoenix, 100
North First Street, Phoenix, AZ 85004,
(602) 257-1525.

Miami: Crown Plaza Biscayne, Biscayne
Boulevard at 16th Street, Miami, FL
33132, (305) 374-0000.

Notice of intent to present oral
statements or written statements must

be mailed to NSSB Public Hearing
Coordinator at the address below.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Judy Gray, Executive Director, NSSB Public Hearing Coordinator, National Skill Standards Board, 1441 L Street, NW, Suite 9000, Washington, DC 20005-3512, (202) 254-8628, (202) 254-8646 (fax).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Form of Public Comment

The hearings will begin at 9:30 a.m. and adjourn at 3:30 p.m. To assist the NSSB in appropriately scheduling speakers, the written notice of intent to present oral comments should include the following information: (1) The name, address, and telephone number of each person to appear; (2) affiliation; and (3) the specific questions, issues or concerns that will be addressed.

Individuals who do not register in advance will be permitted to register and speak at each hearing in order of registration, if time permits. Speakers should limit their oral remarks to no more than 10 minutes. Although it is anticipated that all persons desiring to do so will have an opportunity to speak, time limits may not allow this to occur. However, all written statements will be accepted and incorporated into the public record. The proceedings will be audiotaped and transcribed.

Meeting Procedure and Objectives

The hearing panel will be comprised of members of the NSSB. A designated member of the NSSB will preside at each of the hearings. The Presiding Board Member will:

- (1) regulate the course of the meeting, including the order of appearance of persons presenting oral statements;
- (2) dispose of procedural matters; and
- (3) limit the presentations to matters pertinent to the issues raised in this notice.

Background on the Mission of the National Skill Standards Board

The National Skill Standards Board was created by The National Skill Standards Act of 1994 (108 Stat 192, 20 U.S.C. 5933), signed into law by President Clinton on March 31, 1994. The Board's purpose as stated in the Act is "to serve as a catalyst in stimulating the development and adoption of a voluntary national system of skill standards and of assessment and certification of attainment of skill standards: (1) That will serve as a cornerstone of the national strategy to enhance workforce skills; (2) that will result in increased productivity, economic growth, and American

economic competitiveness; and (3) that can be used consistent with civil rights laws" by the stakeholders enumerated in the Act: the nation, industries, employers, labor organizations, workers, students, entry-level workers, training providers, educators and government.

The Act also states that this voluntary national system of skill standards will serve: (1) to facilitate the transition to high performance work organizations; (2) to increase opportunities for minorities and women; and (3) to facilitate linkages between other components of the national strategy to enhance workforce skills.

NSSB Mission Statement

The mission of the National Skill Standards Board is to encourage the creation and adoption of a national system of skill standards which will enhance the ability of the United States to compete effectively in a global economy. These voluntary skill standards will be developed by industry in full partnership with education, labor and community stakeholders, and will be flexible, portable and continuously updated and improved. This national skill standards system is intended to do the following:

- Promote the growth of high performance work organizations in the private and public sectors that operate on the basis of productivity, quality and innovation, and in the private sector, profitability;
- Raise the standard of living and economic security of American workers by improving access to high skill, high wage employment and career opportunities for those currently in, entering, or re-entering the workforce;
- Encourage the use of world-class academic, occupational and employability standards to guide continuous education and training for current and future workers.

Skill Standards Purposes and Characteristics

This section provides contextual and background information for the questions posed in the next section. We want to know if our operating assumptions make sense to you. This information also summarizes key sections of the authorizing legislation and the NSSB's discussions to date.

The National Skill Standards Board envisions its work as stimulating the industry-led development of voluntary skill standards that embody the academic, occupational and employability components of work. The skill standards will pertain to broad clusters of major occupations that involve one or more industries and that

share common skill requirements. One of the areas on which the NSSB is soliciting public comment is the characteristics that should be used by NSSB as endorsement criteria for skill standards. (Skill Standards development is the responsibility of industry-led voluntary partnerships as described below, not the NSSB.) As described in the legislation and in the NSSB mission statement, the skill standards should:

- (1) take into account relevant skill standards used by other countries;
- (2) meet or exceed the highest applicable skill standards used in the United States;
- (3) take into account academic standards;
- (4) take into account the requirements of high performance work organizations;
- (5) be in a form that permits regular updating;
- (6) promote portability of credentials and facilitate worker mobility within an occupational cluster or industry, among industries, as well as mobility from state to state or from one locale to another; and
- (7) not discriminate by race, color, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, disability or national origin, consistent with Federal civil rights law.

The skill standards should be flexible, portable, and continuously updated and improved. The skill standards must be future-focused, and be based on competencies. The skill standards and the means to meet those standards should be available in a variety of settings to anyone who is interested in them.

The skill standards should reflect the skill requirements and the performance levels necessary for our workers to be at least as well-prepared to compete in the global economy as workers elsewhere in the world. To achieve this goal, the skill standards should reflect the requirements of high performance enterprises, that is, enterprises that compete not only on price, but on the basis of quality, timeliness, customization, and variety. Such competition requires workers who are highly skilled. The skill standards should increase the supply of qualified workers to high performance enterprises, and improve an individual's access to the jobs needed in today's and tomorrow's global economy.

We hope that a voluntary system of skill standards will offer a framework to employers, employees, labor organizations, educators, training providers, states and local communities as they create, refine and re-create their programs and systems to improve the preparation of the people in their communities for the highly demanding

jobs of the modern economy. Skill standards should serve those who are trying to assure their long-term employability: students leaving our colleges and high schools; workers who have been laid off; displaced homemakers, public assistance recipients and others who are entering or reentering the labor force; and currently employed workers. Our hope is that voluntary national skill standards will support efforts of states, organizations, firms and communities to develop and build innovative solutions to workforce preparation issues. We also hope that our work will support and guide innovative industry programs such as worker certification programs and skill-based compensation programs that are designed to enhance the portability and transferability of work skills.

Through these hearings, we hope to hear and learn from the work of regional and local communities, the states, employer and labor efforts to create and implement skill standards and to understand their successes and failures and the processes they used. We also want to hear how the work of the NSSB can best support these innovative efforts.

Occupational Clusters

The first function of the NSSB (enumerated in Section 504 of the legislation) is to identify "broad clusters of major occupations that involve one or more than one industry in the United States and that share characteristics that are appropriate for the development of common skill standards." The skill standards endorsed by NSSB will not address every segment of the U.S. economy. Instead, they will focus on those segments of the economy that will enhance the ability of the United States to compete in the global economy. Consistent with the National Skill Standards Act, the NSSB intends to meet this challenge by promoting the growth of high performance enterprises within these significant economic segments.

The National Skill Standards Act charges the Board with stimulating the development of skill standards (as described in the previous section) for occupational clusters. The Board views the development of skill standards for those jobs which are specific to one company as outside the Board's scope. And although the Board hopes to be involved in the dialogue of what would be helpful for people to know and be able to do for success at work, the actual development of such foundation or academic standards is also beyond the purview of the NSSB's mission.

One of the approaches we are considering would be to focus on encouraging industry to lead partnerships of key stakeholders to identify and set voluntary skill standards for cross industry clusters. These clusters could cut across multiple industries and could be defined by the work people do. Skill standards would be defined by the way work is done in an organization striving for high performance from its employees. Within each cluster, the skill standard would reflect multiple levels of performance, each higher level representing a progression in responsibility from the one preceding it. For each cluster, there may be multiple industry standards, each of these industry standards incorporating the cluster standard on which it is based. This process would be dynamic, needing constant reexamination of the clusters and the industry standards derived from them, so that the skill standards would reflect the continually changing demands of the economy. Only if the voluntary standards have value for the employer and the worker, will they be used.

Voluntary Partnerships

The Board itself will not develop skill standards. Instead, the legislation calls for the NSSB to encourage the formation of industry-led voluntary partnerships to develop the skill standards, and to endorse skill standards produced by voluntary partnerships. The NSSB must decide on the criteria, their definition, and how a partnership will demonstrate it meets these endorsement criteria. The NSSB welcomes the input of the public on these topics to inform our decisions.

The legislation requires that the voluntary partnerships have the following composition:

- Representatives of large and small businesses who have expertise in the area of workforce skill requirements and who are recommended by national business organizations or trade associations in the occupation or industry for which a standard is being developed;
- Representatives of trade associations that have received grants from the Department of Labor or the Department of Education to establish skill standards prior to enactment of the National Skill Standards Act;
- Employees who have expertise in the area of workforce skill development and who shall be:

—Individuals recommended by organized labor organizations representing employees in the occupation or industry for which a standard is being developed; and

—Such other individuals who are non-managerial employees with significant experience and tenure in such occupation or industries as are appropriate given the nature and structure of employment in the occupation or industry;

- Representatives of educational institutions; community-based organizations; and state and local agencies involved in education, vocational-technical education, or employment and training;
- Representatives of other policy development organizations with expertise in the area of workforce skill requirements;
- Representatives of non-governmental organizations with a demonstrated history of successfully protecting the rights of racial, ethnic, or religious minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, or older persons; and
- Individuals with expertise in measurement and assessment, including relevant experience in designing unbiased assessments and performance-based assessments.

The foregoing information on the NSSB's mission, and its views on the purpose and characteristics of skill standards, occupational clusters, the focus of the Board's work, and the composition of the voluntary partnerships are intended to serve as background and a context for public response to the questions below. The Board strongly encourages your comments; they will help shape and inform its decision making process.

Questions for Public Comment

1. What constructive advice can you offer the board as it works towards its mission?
2. Are the characteristics of skill standards as described in the section "Skill Standards' Purposes and Characteristics" important? Would you add or delete characteristics?
3. How do you see your efforts benefiting from a voluntary skill standards framework?
4. What models might we learn from and what guidance can you provide on the process NSSB uses for building a framework of voluntary skill standards?
5. What guidance would you give the board as it develops criteria for endorsing voluntary partnerships?
6. What skill sets are most necessary to assure the success of your group or enterprise and the employability of workers, now and long term?
7. Do you agree that the focus of NSSB's work should be on setting skill standards for broad clusters of jobs or occupations that could cut across

multiple industries? If not, what do you think our focus should be and why?

8. Does the emphasis on encouraging the development of skill standards for highly skilled jobs needed in the modern economy make sense?

9. Does it make sense for the board to encourage the growth of organizations who wish to become high performance?

10. What principles should guide the identification of occupational clusters?

A copy of the authorizing legislation will be available at the hearing. Interested parties may call (202)-254-8628 to request a copy.

Signed at Washington, DC, this 18th day of March, 1996.

Judy Gray,

Executive Director, National Skill Standards Board.

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Agency Information Collection Activities: Submission for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Review; Comment Request

AGENCY: Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

ACTION: Notice of OMB review of information collection and solicitation of public comment.

SUMMARY: The NRC has recently submitted to OMB for review the following proposal for the collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35). The NRC hereby informs potential respondents that an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and that a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

1. *Type of submission:* Revision.
2. *The title of the information collection:* 48 CFR 20, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Acquisition Regulation.
3. *The form number if applicable:* Not applicable.
4. *How often the collection is required:* On occasion; one time.
5. *Who is required or asked to report:* Offerors responding to NRC solicitations and contractors receiving contract awards from NRC.
6. *An estimate of the number of responses:* 11,311.
7. *The estimated number of annual respondents:* 750.
8. *An estimate of the total number of hours needed annually to complete the*