Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Nutrition Service

Agency Information Collection Activities: Proposed Collection; Comment Request—Survey of State Public and Community Nutrition Workforce

AGENCY: Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is publishing for public comment a summary of a proposed information collection. FNS wishes to monitor trends in education and training, work experience, areas of practice, and training needs of the public health and community nutrition workforce at the state and local government levels. A descriptive profile will assist FNS to determine the extent to which the current and future workforce has the necessary training to carry out the WIC program, for which FNS is responsible.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by April 19, 1999 to be assured of consideration.

ADDRESSES: Send comments and requests for copies of this proposed collection of information to Edward Herzog; Food and Nutrition Service; 3101 Park Center Drive; Room 208; Alexandria, VA 22302–1500. 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 will have practical utility; (b) 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; (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 appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. When FNS requests approval for this information collection from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), FNS will provide OMB with all comments received. All comments will thus become public documents.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Edward Herzog, (703) 305–2137.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Survey of State Public Health and Community Nutrition Workforce.

OMB Number: Not yet assigned.

Expiration Date: N/A.

Type of Request: New collection of information.

Abstract: The Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) wishes to obtain information to assess the agency's efforts to recruit and retain public health and community nutritionists to staff the WIC program. Goal III, Objective 3 of the USDA/FNS Strategic Plan for 1998–2002 focuses on improving the nutritional qualifications of WIC staff. Since 1992, FNS has been involved in an initiative targeted at assisting WIC state and local agencies in recruiting and retaining qualified nutrition staff. Recruitment and retention of qualified staff is essential to maintaining the quality nutrition services by providing an environment where staff are appropriately selected, trained, and supported. Opportunities for ongoing training, job advancement, challenging role functions, and competitive salaries are important considerations in recruiting and retaining qualified nutrition staff. Workforce profile data are essential to evaluate the impact of the agency's effort to recruit and retain public health and community nutritionists. State nutrition directors use descriptive information about the community nutrition workforce in their respective states to support recruitment and retention efforts, design training programs, and advise on licensure and certification policy. According to the findings from previous workforce surveys conducted by the Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors, 85% of the public health and community nutrition workforce is employed in WIC programs.

This data collection will be carried out by state public health nutrition directors through their professional association—the Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors (ASTPHND), and will result in state-specific, as well as a national profile of the workforce. Variation in workforce characteristics by state and region will also be profiled. State nutrition directors will be responsible for coordinating data collection within their respective state including identifying appropriate respondents, distributing the questionnaire, instructing respondents on how to fill out the questionnaire, answering any questions from respondents, keeping records of responses, and entering and editing data. ASTPHND has conducted five previous surveys of the public and community nutrition workforce and the state nutrition directors have performed a similar function in the previous surveys.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 20 hours per state nutrition director in addition to an average of 15 minutes per individual respondent.

Respondents: There are two classes or levels of respondents: (1) The designated state public health nutrition directors and (2) persons employed in public health and community nutrition programs within states.

Estimated Number of Respondents: Fifty-three state and territorial public health nutrition directors will be surveyed, to include the 50 States, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia. They will survey approximately 7600 nutrition workers in their respective States and territories.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: One.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: (20 hours × 53 state nutrition directors) + (7600 nutrition workers × 15 minutes) = 2960 hours.

Dated: February 8, 1999.

Samuel Chambers, Jr.,

Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service.

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