

Last Set of Instructions (04.16.2024)

In response to questions about the best way to meet the PRA requirements for the forms, websites and apps used in citizen science or crowdsourcing (CSC) projects, we have improved the instructions for meeting those requirements. This doc reflects those improvements.

Until OMB approves NOAA's request for a generic clearance of its CSC projects and provides an OMB control number and expiration date for that clearance, the following are required on the information collection forms and on the homepage of the website for each CSC project:

1. Placeholders for the OMB control number and expiration date (i.e., OMB Control Number: 0648-XXXX, Expiration Date: XX/XX/202X)
2. The approved generic PRA and Privacy Act statements.

Those requirements are for all forms used by your volunteers, such as hard copy, on-line and app forms, including forms that collect any info, even a name and email address or phone number. The website can be a program office's main website for CSC projects or a website for an individual CSC project.

Meeting the Website Requirements

The simplest way to meet those requirements for a website is to include a statement such as the following near the top of the web page, not buried at the end.

The collection of [name of your project] information is authorized under the OMB Control Number included in the [Citizen Science & Crowdsourcing Information Collection page](#):

That link is to a NMFS web page with the two placeholders and the approved generic PRA and Privacy Act statements. Soon, we will replace the NMFS web page with a NOAA web page with the same info. Once that happens, the above link will automatically take you to the NOAA web page.

Generally, if you have such a statement on the homepage of your website, you do not need to have it elsewhere on your website. The two exceptions are for forms on your website that your volunteers print and complete offline and for a web page that lists the hotline number or email address where individuals can send their information. Such a web page should include the above statement and, as noted below, such a form should include the placeholders and the approved generic PRA and Privacy Act statements.

If NOAA has no control of the content of the website or app used to recruit volunteers or collect information from the volunteers, we cannot meet those requirements and NOAA will ask OMB for an exception.

Meeting the Online and App Forms Requirements

The simplest way to meet those requirements for forms a volunteer completes either online or on an app is to add the statement from above to the first page of the form or the first page of the app the volunteers sees. Putting the approved generic PRA and Privacy Act statements on a separate Google doc that is linked to a Google Form is fine.

Meeting the Hard Copy Forms Requirements

For most hard copy forms, including those volunteers access on your website to print and complete offline, the approved generic PRA and Privacy Act statements and the placeholders for the OMB control number and expiration date must be on the form. Just including a link to them is not adequate. The placeholders should be close to the top of the forms and the approved generic PRA and Privacy Act statements can be placed where they fit best on the hard copy form (e.g., at the end).

There are two exceptions. The first occurs if your CSC project collects limited info about the observations of volunteers by either distributing posters or flyers that ask them to report their observations by phone or email or by making response mailers available to potential volunteers. In either case, you can meet the requirement by including a QR code on the posters, flyers or response mailers, where the IQ code would link the [Citizen Science & Crowdsourcing Information Collection page](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/about-us). You can use the following QR code.



The second exception occurs if your CSC project has multiple hard copy forms that your volunteers always use together. In that case, you only need to add the approved generic PRA and Privacy Act statements and the placeholders for the OMB control number and expiration date to one form.