

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**Rural Housing Service****Notice of Request for Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection**

AGENCY: Rural Housing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed collection; comments requested.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Rural Housing Service's (RHS) intention to request an extension for a currently approved information collection in support of the program for the Housing Preservation Grant Program.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by May 11, 2009 to be assured of consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Bonnie Edwards-Jackson, Finance and Loan Analyst, Multi-Family Housing Preservation and Direct Loan Division, USDA Rural Development, Stop 0781, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-0782, telephone (202) 690-0759 (voice) (this is not a toll free number) or (800) 877-8339 (TDD-Federal Information Relay Service) or via e-mail at, Bonnie.Edwards@wdc.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: RHS/Housing Preservation Grant Program.

OMB Number: 0575-0115.

Expiration Date of Approval: June 30, 2009.

Type of Request: Extension of a currently approved information collection.

Abstract: The primary purpose of the Housing Preservation Grant Program is to repair or rehabilitate individual housing, rental properties, or co-ops owned or occupied by very low- and low-income rural persons. Grantees will provide eligible homeowners, owners of rental properties and owners of co-ops with financial assistance through loans, grants, interest reduction payments or other comparable financial assistance for necessary repairs and rehabilitation of dwellings to bring them up to code or minimum property standards.

Where repair and rehabilitation assistance is not economically feasible or practical the replacement of existing, individual owner occupied housing is available.

These grants were established by Public Law 98-181, the Housing Urban-Rural Recovery Act of 1983, which amended the Housing Act of 1979 (Pub. L. 93-383) by adding section 533, 42 U.S.C. S 2490(m), Housing Preservation

Grants (HPG). In addition, the Secretary of Agriculture has authority to prescribe rules and regulations to implement HPG and other programs under 42 U.S.C. S 1480(j).

Section 533(d) is prescriptive about the information applicants are to submit to RHS as part of their application and in the assessments and criteria RHS is to use in selecting grantees. An applicant is to submit a "statement of activity" describing its proposed program, including the specific activities it will undertake, and its schedule. RHS is required in turn to evaluate proposals on a set of prescribed criteria, for which the applicant will also have to provide information, such as: (1) Very low- and low-income persons proposed to be served by the repair and rehabilitation activities; (2) participation by other public and private organizations to leverage funds and lower the cost to the HPG program; (3) the area to be served in terms of population and need; (4) cost data to assure greatest degree of assistance at lowest cost; (5) administrative capacity of the applicant to carry out the program. The information collected will be the minimum required by law and by necessity for RHS to assure that it funds responsible grantees proposing feasible projects in areas of greatest need. Most data are taken from a localized area, although some are derived from census reports of city, county and Federal governments showing population and housing characteristics.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .81 hours per response.

Respondents: A public body or a public or private nonprofit corporation.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 2,258.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 6.8.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 12,517 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Linda Watts-Thomas, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch at (202 692-0226).

Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of RHS, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of RHS'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.

Comments may be sent to Linda Watts-Thomas, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, STOP 0742, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will become a matter of public record.

Dated: February 4, 2009.

James C. Alsop,

Acting Administrator, Rural Housing Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**National Telecommunications and Information Administration****DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Rural Utilities Service**

[Docket No. 090309298-9299-01]

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Broadband Initiatives

AGENCIES: National Telecommunications and Information Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce; Rural Utilities Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

ACTION: Joint request for information and notice of public meetings.

SUMMARY: Section 6001 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) requires the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to establish the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). The Recovery Act further establishes authority for the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to make grants and loans for the deployment and construction of broadband systems. NTIA and RUS will hold a series of public meetings about the new programs beginning on March 16, 2009. In addition to the information received about the new programs during the public meetings, written comments will be accepted through April 13, 2009. Through this notice, guidance is provided as to the matters to be discussed at these public meetings and