

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: WIC & FMNP Outreach, Innovation, and Modernization Evaluation

**AGENCY:** Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Department of Agriculture (USDA).

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice invites the general public and other public agencies to comment on this proposed information collection. This collection is a new collection. The purpose of this information collection is to provide information on the implementation and effectiveness of modernization projects across all 88 Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) State agencies to help identify successes, opportunities for improvement, and areas for additional support from FNS to strengthen project implementation.

**DATES:** Written comments must be received on or before December 27, 2024.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments may be emailed to [Carol.Dreibelbis@usda.gov](mailto:Carol.Dreibelbis@usda.gov). Comments will also be accepted through the Federal eRulemaking Portal. Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>, and follow the online instructions for submitting comments electronically.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval. All comments will be a matter of public record.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or requests for copies of this information collection should be directed to Carol Dreibelbis at [Carol.Dreibelbis@usda.gov](mailto:Carol.Dreibelbis@usda.gov) or 703-305-2161.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), which was signed into law in March 2021, provided USDA with \$390 million and waiver authority for outreach, innovation, and program modernization in WIC and the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). FNS is interested in understanding the implementation and outcomes related to these modernization efforts.

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 shall 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 that were 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 use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

**Title:** WIC & FMNP Outreach, Innovation, and Modernization Evaluation.

**Form Number:** N/A.

**OMB Number:** 0584-NEW.

**Expiration Date:** Not Yet Determined.

**Type of Request:** New collection.

**Abstract:** The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides supplemental food, nutrition education, and referrals to health and social services to pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are living in households with low incomes and are at nutritional risk. The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) provides eligible WIC participants with FMNP benefits, in addition to their regular WIC benefits, which can be used to buy eligible foods from farmers, farmers' markets, or roadside stands that have been approved by the WIC State agency. While the benefits of participating in WIC have been well documented, WIC continues to reach only about half of those eligible to participate.<sup>1</sup> WIC has

relied on a traditional service delivery model that includes potentially challenging requirements for participants—such as regular in-person-only appointments to determine eligibility and to continue receiving services; limited or no online or digital services; and in-person shopping only. In an effort to improve service delivery and permanently modernize WIC, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 provided FNS with \$390 million and waiver authority to support WIC modernization. Under ARPA, FNS supports WIC modernization efforts by providing grants to all State agencies, offering waivers that support modernization efforts, collaborating with partners via cooperative agreements and contracts, and conducting projects. WIC modernization efforts seek to improve the WIC participant experience, reduce disparities in WIC service delivery, and increase WIC participation and retention.

The WIC & FMNP Outreach, Innovation, and Modernization Evaluation (WIC modernization evaluation) will help FNS understand the implementation and impacts of ARPA-funded projects and waivers to inform current and future modernization efforts. The WIC modernization evaluation has three components: an implementation study, a waiver study, and an impact study. The implementation study will provide a comprehensive understanding of project implementation while accommodating variations in the timing of projects within different program areas, implementation within and between State agencies, and innovative approaches. The implementation study component will collect a broad range of data from WIC State agencies, local agencies, clinics, vendors and authorized outlets (including farmers, farmers' markets, and roadside stands), and WIC participants. These data will provide current and ongoing information about modernization efforts in all 88 WIC State agencies.

*Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Eligibility and WIC Program Reach in 2022.* Prepared by Insight Policy Research, Contract No. 12319819A0005. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support, Project Officer: Grant Lovellette. Available online at: [www.fns.usda.gov/research-analysis](http://www.fns.usda.gov/research-analysis).

<sup>1</sup> Kessler C., Bryant A., Munkacsy K., and Gray K. (2024). *National- and State-Level Estimates of the*

The waiver study component will provide an understanding of waiver issuance and how State agencies used waivers. The waiver study will rely on many of the same data sources as the implementation study, especially the interviews with WIC State agencies. The study will also collect information on whether and how unique waivers were implemented by WIC State agencies to conduct the modernization projects.

The impact study component of the evaluation will measure the impact of the WIC and FMNP modernization projects on participants through key short-term and intermediate-term outcome measures, including enrollment, participation, retention, benefit redemption, participant experience (e.g., satisfaction), and disparities in program delivery. It will address whether the modernization projects improved these key outcome measures and how changes in these outcomes were related to the number and type of modernization projects. While most outcomes will be measured with administrative data (collected under existing projects), the impact study will also use surveys to learn about the experiences and satisfaction of WIC program staff, vendor/authorized outlet staff, and participants with the changes to the WIC program because of the modernization activities. In addition, the impact study will rely on information from the implementation and waiver studies regarding where and when projects and waivers were implemented.

**Affected Public:** Identified respondent groups include the following:

1. State, local, and tribal governments: WIC State agency staff in all 88 State agencies and local agency and clinic staff in every State agency jurisdiction.
2. Business (profit, non-profit, or farm) respondents: WIC and FMNP vendors and authorized outlet staff in every State agency jurisdiction.
3. Individual/household respondents: WIC participants in every State agency jurisdiction.

**Estimated Number of Respondents:** The total estimated number of respondents is 186,608. Of the 186,608 respondents to be contacted, 24,564 are expected to be responsive and 162,044 are expected to be nonresponsive. The breakout is as follows:

1. *5,938 State, local, and tribal government staff:* Of the 132 State agency staff contacted for an interview, 132 are expected to be responsive. Of the 222 local agency and clinic staff contacted for a case study interview, 160 are expected to be responsive. Of the 5,200 State agency, local agency, and clinic staff contacted for a survey, 4,160 are expected to be responsive. Of the 88 State agency staff invited for a webinar, 88 are expected to be responsive. Of the 176 State agency staff invited for a data collection planning meeting, 176 are expected to be responsive. Of the 88 State agency staff asked to support data collection, 88 are expected to be responsive. Of the 32 local agency staff invited for a data collection planning meeting and support data collection, 32 are expected to be responsive.

2. *4,200 business respondents:* Of the 100 WIC vendor/outlet staff contacted for a case study interview, 68 are expected to be responsive. Of the 4,100 WIC vendor/outlet staff contacted for a survey, 3,280 are expected to be responsive.

3. *176,470 individual respondents:* Of the 920 WIC participants contacted for a case study focus group, 580 are expected to be responsive. Of the 175,550 WIC participants contacted for a survey, 15,800 are expected to be responsive.

**Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent:** 9.2 across the entire collection, including respondents who receive communications but do not provide data for the study. The breakout is as follows:

1. *State agency staff:* 6.3 responses per respondent. 132 State agency staff will be asked to complete a virtual interview (each year, for three years) and 1,300 State agency staff will be asked to complete a survey. Prior to data collection, they will receive advanced communications about the study. 88 State agency staff will be invited to attend a webinar. 176 State agency staff will be invited to attend a planning meeting. 88 State agency staff will be asked to support data collection.

2. *Local agency and clinic staff:* 6.6 responses per respondent. 222 local agency and clinic staff will be asked to complete an in-person interview and 3,900 will be asked to complete a

survey. Prior to data collection, they will receive advanced communications about the study. 32 local agency staff will be asked to attend a planning meeting and support data collection.

3. *WIC vendor/outlet staff:* 10.8 responses per respondent. 100 vendor/outlet staff will be asked to complete an in-person case study interview and 4,100 will be asked to complete a survey. Prior to data collection, they will receive advanced communications about the study.

4. *Individual respondents:* 9.3 responses per respondent. 920 WIC participants will be asked to participate in a case study focus group and 175,550 will be asked to complete a survey. Prior to data collection, they will receive advanced communications about the study.

**Estimated Total Annual Responses:** Including respondents who receive communications but do not provide data for the study, there are an estimated 1,717,385 total responses and 572,462 annual responses. This is an estimated annual average, as data collection activities will take place over the course of three years: 2025, 2026, and 2027.

**Estimated Time per Response:** The estimated time of responses varies from 1 minute (0.0167 hours) for receipt of a text or email to 3.0167 hours for local agency staff planning and supporting data collection for case studies. Including respondents who receive communications but do not provide data for the study, the estimated average response time is about 1.2 minutes (0.02 hours).

**Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents:** Including burden on respondents who receive communications but do not provide data for the study, there is an estimated 32,108 hours of total burden and 10,703 hours of annual burden on respondents. This is an estimated annual average, as data collection activities will take place over the course of three years: 2025, 2026, and 2027. Please see the table below for estimated total annual burden for each type of respondent.

**BILLING CODE 3410-30-P**

Respondent Category	Type of respondents	Instruments	Appendix	Sample Size	Number of respondents	Frequency of response	Total responses	Hours per response	Total burden (hours)	Number of Non-respondents	Frequency of response	Total responses	Hours per response	Total burden (hours)	Grand Total Burden Estimate (hours)
Individual/ Household	WIC participants participating in case study focus groups	WIC Participant Case Study Focus Group Recruitment Email from State/Local Agency	Appendix N.2	920	920	1	920	0.0167	15	0	0	-	0.0167	-	15
		WIC Participant Case Study Focus Group Scheduling Email	Appendix N.3	920	644	1	644	0.0167	11	276	1	276	0.0167	4.609	15
		WIC Participant Case Study Focus Group Confirmation Email	Appendix N.5	644	644	1	644	0.0167	11	0	0	-	0.0000	-	11
		WIC Participant Case Study Focus Group Confirmation Text	Appendix N.6	644	644	1	644	0.0167	11	0	0	-	0.0000	-	11
		WIC Participant Case Study Focus Group Reminder Email	Appendix N.7	644	644	1	644	0.0167	11	0	0	-	0.0000	-	11
		WIC Participant Case Study Focus Group Reminder Text	Appendix N.8	644	644	1	644	0.0167	11	0	0	-	0.0000	-	11
		WIC Participant Case Study Focus Group Guide	Appendix F.4	644	580	1	580	1.5000	870	64	1	64	0.0000	-	870
		WIC Participant Case Study Focus Group Thank You Email	Appendix N.9	580	580	1	580	0.0167	10	0	0	-	0.0000	-	10
		WIC Participant Case Study Focus Group Thank You Text	Appendix N.10	580	580	1	580	0.0167	10	0	0	-	0.0000	-	10
	WIC Participant Case Study Focus Group Recruitment Flyer	Appendix N.1	1,600	1,600	1	1,600	0.0167	27	0	0	-	0.0167	-	27	
	WIC participants participating in experience surveys	WIC Participant Experience Survey Recruitment Email from WIC State Agency	Appendix T.2	175,550	175,550	1	175,550	0.0167	2,932	0	0	-	0.0167	-	2,932
		WIC Participant Experience Survey Invitation Email from WIC State Agency	Appendix T.3	175,550	175,550	1	175,550	0.0167	2,932	0	0	-	0.0167	-	2,932
		WIC Participant Experience Survey Invitation Text	Appendix T.4	175,550	175,550	1	175,550	0.0167	2,932	0	0	-	0.0167	-	2,932
		WIC Participant Experience Survey Reminder Email	Appendix T.5	175,550	175,550	2	351,100	0.0167	5,863	0	0	-	0.0167	-	5,863
		WIC Participant Experience Survey Reminder Text	Appendix T.6	175,550	175,550	2	351,100	0.0167	5,863	0	0	-	0.0167	-	5,863
		WIC Participant Experience Survey Reminder Phone Call	Appendix T.5	175,550	8,778	1	8,778	0.0334	293	0	0	-	0.0334	-	293
		WIC Participant Experience Survey Reminder Postcard	Appendix T.5	175,550	5,267	1	5,267	0.0167	88	0	0	-	0.0167	-	88
		WIC Participant Experience Survey	Appendix Q	175,550	15,800	1	15,800	0.1670	2,639	159,750	1	159,750	0.0000	-	2,639
		WIC Participant Experience Survey Thank You Email	Appendix T.7	15,800	15,800	1	15,800	0.0167	264	0	0	-	0.0000	-	264
WIC Participant Experience Survey Thank You Text	Appendix T.8	15,800	15,800	1	15,800	0.0167	264	0	0	-	0.0000	-	264		
Study Description for WIC Participants	Appendix N.4	175,550	175,550	1	175,550	0.0167	2,932	0	0	-	0.0167	-	2,932		
<b>Individual/ Household Sub-Total</b>				<b>176,470</b>	<b>16,380</b>	<b>8.33</b>	<b>1,473,324</b>	<b>0.0190</b>	<b>27,966</b>	<b>160,090</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>160,090</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>27,991</b>
Business (Profit, Non-Profit, or Farm)	WIC & FMNP vendor/outlet staff participating in case study interviews	WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Case Study Interview Recruitment Email from State or Local Agency	Appendix M.1	100	100	1	100	0.0167	2	0	0	-	0.0167	-	2
		WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Case Study Interview Recruitment Email from the Mathematica Study Team	Appendix M.2	100	75	1	75	0.0167	1	25	1	25	0.0167	0.418	2
		WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Case Study Interview Confirmation Email	Appendix M.4	75	75	1	75	0.0167	1	0	0	-	0.0000	-	1
		WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Case Study Interview Confirmation Text	Appendix M.5	75	75	1	75	0.0167	1	0	0	-	0.0000	-	1
		WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Case Study Interview Reminder Email	Appendix M.6	75	75	1	75	0.0167	1	0	0	-	0.0000	-	1
		WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Case Study Interview Reminder Text	Appendix M.7	75	75	1	75	0.0167	1	0	0	-	0.0000	-	1
		WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Case Study Interview Protocol	Appendix F.2	75	68	1	68	1.0000	68	7	7	1	0.0000	-	68
	WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Case Study Interview Thank You Email	Appendix M.8	68	68	1	68	0.0167	1	0	0	-	0.0000	-	1	
	WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Case Study Interview Thank You Text	Appendix M.9	68	68	1	68	0.0167	1	0	0	-	0.0000	-	1	
	WIC & FMNP vendor/outlet staff participating in experience surveys	WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Experience Survey Recruitment Email from WIC State Agency	Appendix S.2	4,100	4,100	1	4,100	0.0167	68	0	0	-	0.0167	-	68
		WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Experience Survey Invitation Email from the Mathematica Study Team	Appendix S.3	4,100	4,100	1	4,100	0.0167	68	0	0	-	0.0167	-	68
		WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Experience Survey Invitation Text	Appendix S.4	4,100	4,100	1	4,100	0.0167	68	0	0	-	0.0167	-	68
		WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Experience Survey Reminder Email	Appendix S.5	4,100	4,100	2	8,200	0.0167	137	0	0	-	0.0167	-	137
		WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Experience Survey Reminder Text	Appendix S.6	4,100	4,100	2	8,200	0.0167	137	0	0	-	0.0167	-	137
		WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Experience Survey Reminder Phone Call	Appendix S.5	4,100	1,230	1	1,230	0.0334	41	0	0	-	0.0334	-	41
		WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Experience Survey	Appendix P	4,100	3,280	1	3,280	0.1670	548	820	1	820	0.0000	-	548
		WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Experience Survey Thank You Email	Appendix S.7	3,280	3,280	1	3,280	0.0167	55	0	0	-	0.0000	-	55
WIC & FMNP Vendor/Outlet Staff Experience Survey Thank You Text		Appendix S.8	3,280	3,280	1	3,280	0.0167	55	0	0	-	0.0000	-	55	

Respondent Category	Type of respondents	Instruments	Appendix	Sample Size	Number of respondents	Frequency of response	Total responses	Hours per response	Total burden (hours)	Number of Non-respondents	Frequency of response	Total responses	Hours per response	Total burden (hours)	Grand Total Burden Estimate (hours)
		Study Description for WIC & FMNP Vendors/Outlets	Appendix M.3	4,100	4,100	1	4,100	0.0167	68	0	0	-	0.0167	-	68
<b>Business (Profit, Non-Profit, or Farm) Sub-Total</b>				<b>4,200</b>	<b>3,348</b>	<b>10.61</b>	<b>44,549</b>	<b>0.0297</b>	<b>1,324</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>0.0005</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1,325</b>
State, Local, or Tribal Government	WIC local agency/clinic staff participating in case study interviews	WIC Local Agency Case Study Recruitment Email from State Agency	Appendix L.1	32	32	1	32	0.0167	0.5344	0	0	-	0.0167	-	1
		WIC Local Agency Case Study Planning Call Recruitment Email from the Mathematica Study Team and Planning Call	Appendix L.2	32	32	1	32	3.0167	96.5344	0	0	-	3.0167	-	97
		WIC Local Agency Staff Case Study Interview Scheduling Email	Appendix L.3	222	178	1	178	0.0167	2.9726	44	1	44	0.0167	0.735	4
		WIC Local Agency Staff Case Study Interview Reminder Email	Appendix L.5	178	178	1	178	0.0167	2.9726	0	0	-	0.0000	-	3
		WIC Local Agency Staff Case Study Interview Protocol	Appendix F.3	178	160	1	160	1.0000	160.0000	18	1	18	0.0000	-	160
		WIC Local Agency Staff Case Study Interview Thank You Email	Appendix L.6	160	160	1	160	0.0167	2.6720	0	0	-	0.0000	-	3
		Study Description for WIC Local Agencies	Appendix L.4	32	32	1	32	0.0167	0.5344	0	0	-	0.0167	-	1
	WIC local agency/clinic staff participating in experience surveys	WIC Program Staff Experience Survey Invitation Email from the Mathematica Study Team	Appendix R.2	3,900	3,900	1	3900	0.0167	65.1300	0	0	-	0.0167	-	65
		WIC Program Staff Experience Survey Reminder Email	Appendix R.3	3,900	3,900	4	15600	0.0167	260.5200	0	0	-	0.0167	-	261
		WIC Program Staff Experience Survey	Appendix O	3,900	3,120	1	3120	0.1670	521.0400	760	1	760	0.0000	-	521
		WIC Program Staff Experience Survey Thank You Email	Appendix R.4	3,120	3,120	1	3120	0.0167	52.1040	0	0	-	0.0000	-	52
	WIC State agency staff participating in interviews	WIC State Agency Study Recruitment Email from the Mathematica Study Team and Planning Call	Appendix K.1	176	176	1	176	0.5167	90.9392	0	0	-	0.5167	-	91
		WIC State Agency Staff Interview Scheduling Email and Preparation Time	Appendix K.2	132	132	3	396	0.2667	105.6132	0	0	-	0.2667	-	106
		WIC State Agency Staff Interview Reminder Email	Appendix K.3	132	132	3	396	0.0167	6.6132	0	0	-	0.0167	-	7
		WIC State Agency Staff Interview Protocol	Appendix F.1	132	132	3	396	1.0000	396.0000	0	0	-	1.0000	-	396
		WIC State Agency Staff Interview Thank You Email and Follow-up Questions	Appendix K.4	132	132	3	396	0.2667	105.6132	0	0	-	0.2667	-	106
		Study Description for WIC State Agencies	Appendix J	176	176	1	176	0.0167	2.9392	0	0	-	0.0167	-	3
	WIC State agency staff participating in experience surveys	WIC Program Staff Experience Survey Invitation Email from the Mathematica Study Team	Appendix R.2	1,300	1,300	1	1300	0.0167	21.7100	0	0	-	0.0167	-	22
		WIC Program Staff Experience Survey Reminder Email	Appendix R.3	1,300	1,300	4	5200	0.0167	86.8400	0	0	-	0.0167	-	87
		WIC Program Staff Experience Survey	Appendix O	1,300	1,040	1	1040	0.1670	173.6800	260	1	260	0.0000	-	174
		WIC Program Staff Experience Survey Thank You Email	Appendix R.4	1,040	1,040	1	1040	0.0167	17.3680	0	0	-	0.0000	-	17
	WIC State agency staff coordinating logistics	Mathematica Study Team Request to WIC State Agencies for WIC Program Staff Contact List for Experience Survey	Appendix R.1	88	88	1	88	2.0000	176.0000	0	0	-	2.0000	-	176
		Mathematica Study Team Request to WIC State Agencies for WIC Participant Contact List for Experience Survey	Appendix T.1	88	88	1	88	2.0000	176.0000	0	0	-	2.0000	-	176
Mathematica Study Team Request to WIC State agencies for WIC & FMNP vendor/outlet staff contact list for experience survey		Appendix S.1	88	88	1	88	2.0000	176.0000	0	0	-	2.0000	-	176	
USDA Endorsement Letter for WIC State Agencies		Appendix I	88	88	1	88	0.0167	1.4696	0	0	-	0.0167	-	1	
WIC State Agency Webinar Invitation Email and Webinar		Appendix H	88	88	1	88	1.0167	89.4696	0	0	-	1.0167	-	89	
<b>State, Local, or Tribal Government Sub-Total</b>				<b>5,938</b>	<b>4,836</b>	<b>6.31</b>	<b>37,468</b>	<b>0.07450</b>	<b>2,791</b>	<b>1,102</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>1,102</b>	<b>0.0007</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>2,792</b>
<b>COMBINED TOTAL</b>				<b>186,608</b>	<b>24,564</b>	<b>8.33</b>	<b>1,555,341</b>	<b>0.02064</b>	<b>32,102</b>	<b>162,044</b>	<b>1.00</b>	<b>162,044</b>	<b>0.0000</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>32,108</b>

Tameka Owens,

Acting Administrator and Assistant  
Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service.

[FR Doc. 2024-25008 Filed 10-25-24; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-30-C

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Forest Service

#### Information Collection; Significant Cave Nomination Application

**AGENCY:** Forest Service, Agriculture (USDA).

**ACTION:** Notice; request for comment.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Forest Service is seeking comments from all interested individuals and organizations on the extension without change to a currently approved collection information collection, *Significant Cave Nominations under the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act*.

**DATES:** Comments must be received in writing on or before December 27, 2024 to be assured of consideration.

Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments concerning this notice should be addressed to Limaris Soto, Lands, Minerals, and Geology, 1617 Cole Boulevard, Building 17, Lakewood CO 80401. Comments also may be submitted via facsimile to 303-275-5122 or by email to [limaris.soto@usda.gov](mailto:limaris.soto@usda.gov).

Comments submitted in response to this notice may be made available to the public through relevant websites and upon request. For this reason, please do not include in your comments information of a confidential nature, such as sensitive personal information or proprietary information. If you send an email comment, your email address will be automatically captured and included as part of the comment that is placed in the public docket and made available on the internet. Please note that responses to this public comment request containing any routine notice about the confidentiality of the communication will be treated as public comments that may be made available to the public notwithstanding the inclusion of the routine notice.

The public may inspect the draft supporting statement and/or comments received at 1617 Cole Boulevard, Building 17, Lakewood, CO 80401, during normal business hours. Visitors are encouraged to call ahead to 720-827-8912 to facilitate entry to the building. The public may request an electronic copy of the draft supporting

statement and/or any comments received be sent via return email. Requests should be emailed to [limaris.soto@usda.gov](mailto:limaris.soto@usda.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Limaris Soto, Lands, Minerals, and Geology, by phone at 720-827-8912 or email to [limaris.soto@usda.gov](mailto:limaris.soto@usda.gov).

Individuals who use telecommunications devices for the deaf and hard of hearing may call 711 to reach the Telecommunications Relay Service, 24 hours a day, every day of the year, including holidays.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*Title:* Significant Cave Nomination Application.

*OMB Number:* 0596-0244.

*Expiration Date of Approval:* December 31, 2024.

*Type of Request:* Extension without change to a currently approved collection.

*Abstract:* The information covered in this request applies to caves on Federal lands administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. The Forest Service proposes to collect the information in this request in accordance with the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act (FCRPA) [Pub. L. 100-691, 107 Stat. 4546] and regulations at 36 CFR 290 (Cave Resources Management) which require the Secretary of Agriculture to identify and protect significant caves on National Forest System lands.

The Forest Service must collect this information to comply with the FCRPA (16 U.S.C. 4301-4310) and its implementing regulations at 36 CFR 290 that contain criteria for the identification of significant caves. The information collection is also responsive to requirements of the 36 CFR part 290—Cave Management regulations that specify the process for nomination of significant caves and assessment of whether the listed criteria for a cave to be considered significant have been met. 36 CFR 290.3(a) states that significant cave nominations will be accepted by the Forest Supervisor where the cave is located.

The Forest Service uses the information in a cave nomination to determine if specified criteria are met for the nominated cave to be listed as significant in accordance with the FCRPA and regulations at 36 CFR 290.3. The information is necessary for full compliance with agencies' responsibilities to identify and protect significant caves and their resources. Nominations are voluntary. The information collected in the Significant Cave Nomination Worksheet includes:

- The name, address, and telephone number of the individual or

organization submitting the nomination. This allows us to confirm the source of the information;

- The name of the cave, which is necessary for the listing of caves and to ensure there are no duplications;

- The location of the cave, which is essential for verification, management, and future planning purposes;

- The name of the agency and the administrative unit, which is necessary to ensure that the application is forwarded to the appropriate agency office;

- A discussion of how the cave meets the criteria, which is the key aspect of the nomination, and is used to determine whether the cave should be designated as significant;

- Studies, maps, research papers, and other supporting documentation, which are important in the significance evaluation;

- The name, address, and telephone number of the individual who is knowledgeable about the resources in the cave, which are necessary in case the information in the nomination is unclear or there is a need for additional information to complete the evaluation;

- The date that the nomination is submitted, which is essential for tracking purposes; and

- The signature and title of the individual submitting the nomination, which is necessary to confirm that it is an official nomination.

The Forest Service collects the information from anyone who wishes to nominate a cave to be considered significant. Caves can be nominated by the public, Forest Service partners, other government agencies, and Forest Service staff. The information collected is used to determine whether a nominated cave meets specified criteria to be considered significant per the FCRPA and 36 CFR 290.

Forest Service Manual 2880.43 states that the Forest Supervisor must ensure that all caves within their jurisdictions are evaluated in accordance with the FCRPA and 36 CFR 290 and make a determination of significant caves nominated for such designation. Under the FCRPA the Secretary shall request that the list of significant caves shall be updated periodically, after consultation with appropriate private sector interest, including cavers. If agencies did not collect cave nominations, they might not become aware of potentially significant caves' existence or might have insufficient information upon which to base a judgment as to their significance. As a result, it is likely that agencies would not be able to comply fully with their statutory responsibilities to identify and protect significant caves