

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

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

November 21, 1997.

The Department of Agriculture has submitted the following information collection requirement(s) to OMB for review and clearance under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Public Law 104-13. Comments regarding (a) whether the 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 burden including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; (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 should be addressed to: Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Washington, D.C. 20503 and to Department Clearance Office, USDA, OCIO, Mail Stop 7602, Washington, D.C. 20250-7602. Comments regarding these information collections are best assured of having their full effect if received within 30 days of this notification. Copies of the submission(s) may be obtained by calling (202) 720-6746.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless the collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number and the agency informs potential persons who are to respond to the collection of information that such persons are not required to respond to the collection of information unless it

displays a currently valid OMB control number.

• Food and Consumer Service

Title: Food Coupon Deposit Document.

OMB Control Number: 0584-0314.

Summary of Collection: The Food Coupon Deposit Document is used by all financial institutions when remitting food coupons to the Federal Reserve.

Need and Use of the Information: The information allows financial institutions, the Federal Reserve and the Food and Consumer Service to track food coupon deposits.

Description of Respondents: Business or other for-profit.

Number of Respondents: 10,000.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting: On occasion.

Total Burden Hours: 3,675.

• Rural Utilities Service

Title: 7 CFR 1794, Environmental Policies and Procedures.

OMB Control Number: 0572-New.

Summary of Collection: Information collected includes a proposal for the project and an environmental analysis.

Need and Use of the Information: The information will be used to evaluate the cost and feasibility of the project and the environmental impact.

Description of Respondents: Not-for-profit institutions; Business or other for-profit.

Number of Respondents: 600.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting: On occasion.

Total Burden Hours: 415,000.

• Food and Consumer Service

Title: FSP Store Application.

OMB Control Number: 0584-0008.

Summary of Collection: The Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended, requires that the Agency determine the eligibility of firms and specified programs to accept and redeem food stamp benefits and to monitor them for compliance and continued eligibility.

Need and Use of the Information: This information is used for determining a firm's eligibility for participation in the program, program administration, compliance monitoring and investigations, and for sanctioning stores found to be violating the program.

Description of Respondents: Business or other for-profit.

Number of Respondents: 80,613.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting: On occasion.

Total Burden Hours: 18,396.

• Foreign Agricultural Service

Title: Regulations Covering CCC's Facility Guarantee Program (FGP).

OMB Control Number: 0551-0032.

Summary of Collection: The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) requires that an application be submitted to participate in the Facility Guarantee Program (FGP). A request to become an eligible participant in the FGP is included in the application. This information ensures CCC that all participants have a business office in the United States.

Need and Use of the Information: The information is necessary in order to determine eligibility for participation in the Facility Guarantee Program.

Description of Respondents: Business or other for-profit.

Number of Respondents: 25.

Frequency of Responses:

Recordkeeping; Reporting: On occasion.

Total Burden Hours: 647.

• Natural Resources Conservation Service

Title: Rural Abandoned Mine Program.

OMB Control Number: 0578-0019.

Summary of Collection: Information is collected regarding progress in applying the conservation plan and a contract to receive Federal cost-share assistance is completed.

Need and Use of the Information: The information is used to ensure proper utilization of program funds.

Description of Respondents: Farms; Individuals or households; State, Local or Tribal Government.

Number of Respondents: 400.

Frequency of Responses: Reporting: On occasion.

Total Burden Hours: 223.

Emergency processing of this submission has been requested by December 12, 1997.

• Rural Business—Cooperative Service

Title: 7 CFR Part 4284-G, Rural Business Opportunity Grants.

OMB Control Number: 0570-New.

Summary of Collection: Information collected includes a scope of work, organizational documents, a narrative description of the project, financial statements, and an evaluation method of the project's success.

Need and Use of the Information: The information is used to make decisions

regarding eligibility of applicants and selection priority, to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and to evaluate the program.

Description of Respondents: Not for-profit institutions; State, Local or Tribal Government.

Number of Respondents: 100.

Frequency of Responses: Recordkeeping; Reporting: On occasion; Monthly; Quarterly.

Total Burden Hours: 8704.

Donald Hulcher,

Departmental Clearance Officer.

[FR Doc. 97-31015 Filed 11-25-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Economic Research Service

Notice of Intent To Seek Approval to Collect Information

AGENCY: Economic Research Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub.L. No. 104-13) and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations at 5 CFR part 1320 (60 FR 44978, August 29, 1995), this notice announces the Economic Research Service's (ERS) intention to request approval for a new information collection on the demographic and economic characteristics of participants in USDA's Single Family Direct Loan Rural Housing Program in order to better understand how this program helps provide adequate and affordable housing for rural residents.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by January 30, 1998 to be assured of consideration.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR COMMENTS: Contact Linda Ghelfi or Leslie Whitener, Food Assistance, Poverty, and Well-Being Branch, Food and Rural Economics Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1800 M. St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036-5801, 202-694-5420.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Application for ERS collection of information on participants in USDA's Single Family Direct Loan Rural Housing Program.

Type of Request: Approval to collect information on participants in USDA's Single Family Direct Loan Rural Housing Program.

Abstract: The Economic Research Service has the responsibility to provide

social and economic intelligence on changing rural housing needs in the United States to help assess the relationship between Federal housing assistance policies and rural development. Research activities focus on three major objectives: (1) Identification of trends in rural housing availability, affordability, and adequacy which underlie an understanding of rural housing needs; (2) assessment of the use and effectiveness of Federal housing assistance programs in rural areas; and (3) investigation of the potential effects of Federal policy changes on rural housing programs and the residents they serve. Housing has an enormous influence on the quality of life of rural residents, and rural housing is an important focus of the Department's rural development efforts. Research findings are provided to public and private decision-makers for use in developing and evaluating policies and programs to insure that adequate and affordable housing is available to rural residents.

The USDA, through its Rural Development Single Family Direct Loan Housing Program, has provided billions of dollars to over 600,000 low-income rural borrowers nationwide. The Department has only sporadic and incomplete information on the residents that benefit from these program outlays and what this program means for the stock of available, affordable, and adequate single family housing in rural areas. The data collection effort proposed here will provide a unique and detailed information base on the characteristics of USDA's Section 502 Direct Loan Program participants to help (1) assess the impact of this housing-assistance program on rural residents and their communities and (2) provide a better understanding of the effects of changing Federal policies, such as welfare reform, on rural borrowers's participation in the direct loan program. The survey will collect information from USDA-assisted borrowers to determine their demographic, employment, income, and housing characteristics; reliance on other public assistance programs; and dependence on rural housing program funds. This information will help to fill a serious gap in our understanding of the nature of housing needs in rural areas and will provide USDA and other policy makers with sound information to help evaluate current programs and develop more effective rural housing policies. ERS, working with Washington State University's Social and Economic Sciences Research Center, will conduct a telephone survey of borrowers

participating in USDA's Section 502 Single Family Direct Loan Housing Program. Borrowers to be interviewed will be selected from a simple random national sample of recent borrowers who obtained loans during 1995, 1996, or 1997, taken from USDA's Rural Development administrative records. Survey data will be collected using Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) techniques, which are more efficient and less time consuming than traditional written interview techniques. Responses are voluntary and confidential. Survey data will be used with other data for statistical purposes and reported only in aggregate or statistical form.

Information to be obtained from borrowers includes: characteristics of current and past housing; housing problems; satisfaction with current residence, neighborhood, and the USDA financing experience; demographic characteristics of household members; education and employment characteristics of borrowers; public assistance program participation; and sources and amounts of household income. No existing data sources, including USDA administrative data or the biennial American Housing Survey, are sufficiently detailed to allow an in-depth analysis of the relationships among these variables for participants in the Section 502 program. These data and the research they will support are vital to the Department's ability to assess the impact of its rural housing programs on rural residents and rural community development.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this data collection is estimated to average 20 minutes per completed interview, including time for listening to instructions, gathering data needed, and responding to questionnaire items.

Respondents: Homeowners who obtained a loan during 1995, 1996, and 1997 through USDA's Section 502 Single Family Direct Loan Program.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 3,000.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 1,000 hours. Copies of information concerning the data collection can be obtained from Linda Ghelfi or Leslie Whitener, Food Assistance, Poverty and Well-Being Branch, Food and Rural Economics Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1800 M. St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036-5801, 202-694-5420.

Comments: Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper functions of the agency, including