

## B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHOD

1. Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed same. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.

Approximately 4,000 non-profit organizations, which include faith-based and community organizations, will be surveyed. This number is the total of all non-profit applicants to 14 different USDA Rural Development programs during Federal fiscal years 2004-2006. These programs were selected because they are included in a White House-initiated annual data collection effort under the Faith Based and Community Initiative and conducted by the USDA. These programs are part of that annual data collection effort because they have been previously identified as providing the best opportunities for faith-based and community organizations to partner with USDA Rural Development.

A census methodology will be employed due to the lack of sufficient information to create a stratified sample. The various elements of the population would require the organization of many different subgroups, and USDA Rural Development does not have some of this information readily available, if at all. The survey population includes applicants to 14 different USDA Rural Development programs during a period of three Federal fiscal years, collected from 47 different state offices. The size of the organizations to be surveyed (as determined by size of budget and number of staff, for example) is largely unknown. The census methodology was also chosen because this is an initial attempt for USDA or other Federal agencies involved in the FBCI to engage in a survey of this type.

While stratification of the respondent universe is not feasible prior to the survey, the results will be stratified for analysis purposes. Section IV of the survey is designed to provide USDA Rural Development with information on the type of organization in order to compare the knowledge and experiences of faith-based and secular groups. Similarly, this section will allow comparison between organizations of different sizes (as measured by size of budget and number of paid staff). The year the organization was established will also help determine what events may have influence any trend in the data. The strata in the results will merely enhance the depth of information collected. Given that response is voluntary, survey results and any analysis thereof will be limited to internal agency use only.

Anticipated response rate is 35%. Other USDA Rural Development surveys targeted at customer service have had response rates of around 20%. However, due to the various promotional activities described below, the response rate is expected to increase substantially. As this is the first survey that USDA or other any Federal agency has conducted to collect this type of data under the auspices of the Faith-Based and Community Initiative, it is not entirely clear what response rate is reasonable to expect. See Question 3 below for further discussion of anticipated response rate.

2. Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:

- Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection. Not applicable because the survey will be a census of the approximately 4,000 non-profit organizations that applied for USDA Rural Development funding in Federal fiscal years 2004-2006.
- Estimation procedure. None.

- Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification.  
The responses provided to this survey will meet the purpose described in justification.
- Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures. None.
- Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.  
Respondents will only need to report information once.

3. Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield “reliable” data that can be generalized to the universe.

USDA Rural Development will take several steps to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response.

In order to minimize time required to complete the survey, questions were limited to two pages. In addition, the survey should not require information that is not readily available to the survey recipients.

A postage-paid envelope will be included with the survey to minimize the resources required for response. A cover letter discussing the survey and its purpose will also be included with the survey. This letter will provide a timeframe for response (two weeks) and will also provide the email address and phone number for Rhonda Brown, Rural Development Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Coordinator, in case the respondents have questions about the survey. A copy of this letter is attached to this Supporting Statement.

USDA Rural Development will post a preliminary notification of the survey and anticipated mailing date on its Faith-Based and Community Initiatives webpage. In addition, the USDA Faith-Based and Community Initiative departmental office will send out an e-mail announcement as preliminary notification of the survey to its list-serve of approximately 7,000 organizations. While some organizations on this list-serve will not receive the survey, it will serve as another form of notification. A copy of this list-serve announcement/website notification is attached to this Supporting Statement.

Announcements regarding this survey will also be made at all appropriate venues (e.g., a FBCI Conference to be held in Indianapolis in early November that will attract 1,000 attendees) to alert potential survey recipients that this mailing is being conducted and their participation is encouraged.

After the two-week timeframe for response, USDA Rural Development will send a postcard to the survey recipients both thanking those who responded and reminding those who have not to please do so. After another two-week period, the survey will be re-sent to those survey recipients who have not responded. This is expected to increase the response rate approximately 10-15%.

There is a particular issue that demonstrates the limitation of this survey with respect to non-response bias. The total survey population includes all non-profit organizations who applied for funding in the defined time period, including those whose applications were rejected. A previous denial of funding may motivate an organization to respond and try to share its concerns. However, a denial may also deter the organization from further contact with USDA Rural Development. In order to ameliorate this weakness, the cover letter is to help survey recipients understand the utility in completing the survey. For example, it states that this survey will assist USDA Rural Development in improving its services in the future.

In addition, as stated in Part B, item 1, interpretation of results will be limited to internal agency purposes. USDA Rural Development expects to learn more about the understanding of faith-based and community organizations with respect to the Equal Treatment Rule. This will be limited to Rural Development, and not extrapolated to another agency within USDA or the Federal government. Thus, while issues of non-response bias could exist in this survey, a cautious use of the resulting analysis will help to mitigate the impact.

4. Describe any test of procedure or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.

A draft survey was provided to a small number of faith and community based organizations on September 26, 2006, at the White House Regional Conference on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in Denver, Colorado. A volunteer group of 6 faith-based and community organizations completed the survey in order to determine how well they understood the questions and how long it would take to complete. The average time for completion of the survey was approximately 5 minutes, and no comments were received.

5. Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the designing and the name of the Agency contractor(s), grantee(s) or other persons who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the Agency.

The USDA contact person is Therese Lyons, Director, Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, Office of the Secretary, (202) 720-2552.

The Rural Development contact person is Rhonda Brown, Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Coordinator, (202) 692-0298.

Statistical Review was provided by: Contact- Norman Bennett (202) 720-2248, National Agricultural Statistics Service, USDA.