



United States Department of Agriculture
Rural Development

APR 20 2010

SUBJECT: Request for Emergency Review and Clearance
for a New Information Collection Request

TO: Nicholas A. Fraser
Desk Officer
Office of Management Budget

THROUGH: Charlene Parker
Clearance Officer

FROM: Jonathan Adelstein
RUR Administrator
Rural Utilities Service

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Adelstein". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Abstract of Program and Implementation

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) into law (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P. L. 111-5, 123 Stat. 115 (2009)). The essential goal of the Recovery Act is to provide a "direct fiscal boost to help lift our Nation from the greatest economic crisis in our lifetimes and lay the foundation for future growth." Accordingly, the Recovery Act identifies five overall purposes: (1) to preserve and create jobs and promote economic recovery; (2) to assist those most impacted by the recession; (3) to provide investments needed to increase economic efficiency by spurring technological advances in science and health; (4) to invest in transportation, environmental protection, and other infrastructure that will provide long-term economic benefits; and (5) to stabilize State and local government budgets. The Recovery Act further instructs the President and the heads of Federal departments and agencies to manage and expend Recovery Act funds to achieve these five purposes, "commencing expenditures and activities as quickly as possible consistent with prudent management."

On January 22, 2010, the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) published its second and final Notice of Funds Availability in the Federal Register announcing the final round of funding for the RUS Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) authorized by the Recovery Act (Federal Register, Volume 75, No. 14, January 22, 2010). As part of that notice, RUS created three new categories for funding to be solicited by publication of a Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP details those requirements with respect to application contents, as well as eligible expenses under each funding opportunity summarized below:

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Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>

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1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (Voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

Satellite Service Grants

Applicants may submit grant requests to serve only unserved rural premises in any of the Satellite Regions listed in the RFP. Applicants may propose to serve more than one Satellite Region by submitting a Regional Application which is broken out for each Satellite Region it proposes to serve, and/or by submitting a National Application covering at least six of the Satellite Regions. At a minimum, an application for Satellite projects must commit to providing no cost CPE (including no installation, activation, or other fees) for all packages offered. In addition, the Basic Service Package must be offered at a rate no higher than \$50 per month for at least one year with no length of service requirements.

Rural Library Broadband Grants

Awardees under the First Round NOFA or Second Round NOFA, or Applicants under the Second Round NOFA may submit a grant request for providing a broadband connection to any rural library in their proposed funded service area that was constructed or to be constructed with funding from USDA's Community Facilities program of the Rural Housing Service and that is without broadband service. The grant request must include the broadband connection to such rural library. In addition to the connection to these unserved rural libraries, Applicants may also request funds to accommodate up to 10 computer workstations and related equipment.

Technical Assistance Grants

Awardees under the First Round NOFA or Second Round NOFA, Applicants under the Second Round NOFA, or Indian Tribes may submit an additional grant request for funding regional broadband development planning activities associated with regions or USDA Regions in rural areas. Regional applications should focus on the broadband-related outcomes that promote economic integration and cohesion of their self-defined geographic area.

Reason for Emergency Clearance

The Recovery Act requires that all funding must be obligated by September 30, 2010. To accomplish this for these three new initiatives, prompt approval of the paperwork burden package is imperative. In order to provide applicants with sufficient time to complete and submit applications, and allow the agency sufficient time to review, process and award grants, the agency requests review and approval of this emergency paperwork collection package as soon as possible so that RUS can continue accepting applications for the national broadband initiative created by the Recovery Act.

As previously stated, this action was created by Congress under the 2009 Recovery Act. Before funds can become available, paperwork clearance is required on the associated burden. In compliance with OMB regulations (5 CFR part 13320), which implements the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub.L. 104-13), the information collection requirements imposed by this action are submitted to OMB for emergency review and approval.

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