

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Telecommunications and Information Administration
Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP)
Quarterly and Annual Performance Progress Reports
OMB Control No. 0660-0037

A. JUSTIFICATION

This request for extension and revision of a currently approved collection of information is required for NTIA to collect performance information from grant recipients through reporting and monitoring to comply with Recovery Act, OMB, and DOC statutory and regulatory requirements.

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) establishes and provides \$4.7 billion for the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) and directs that these funds be awarded by September 30, 2010. Of these funds, at least \$200 million will be made available for competitive grants to expand public computer center capacity; at least \$250 million will be made available for competitive grants for innovative programs to encourage sustainable adoption of broadband service;¹ and up to \$350 million will be made available to fund the State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program (Broadband Mapping Program) authorized by the Broadband Data Improvement Act.² The Broadband Mapping Program is designed to support the development and maintenance of a nationwide broadband map for use by policymakers and consumers.³

Section 6001 of the Recovery Act establishes five core purposes to be advanced by projects funded under BTOP:

- (1) To provide access to broadband service to consumers residing in unserved areas of the country;
- (2) To provide improved access to broadband service to underserved areas of the country;
- (3) To provide broadband access, education, and support to community anchor institutions (e.g., schools, libraries, medical facilities), or organizations and agencies serving vulnerable

¹ See American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Pub. L. No. 111-5, 123 Stat. 115, 128 (2009) (“Recovery Act”).

² Pub. L. No. 110-385, 122 Stat. 4096 (to be codified at 47 U.S.C. § 1301 *et seq.*).

³ See State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program, Notice of Funds Availability and Solicitation of Applications, 74 Fed. Reg. 32545 (July 8, 2009).

populations (e.g., low-income, unemployed, aged), or job-creating strategic facilities located in state or federally designated economic development areas;

(4) To improve access to, and use of, broadband service by public safety agencies; and

(5) To stimulate the demand for broadband, economic growth, and job creation.⁴

In addition, the Recovery Act stipulates that The Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information:

“...shall create and maintain a fully searchable database, accessible on the Internet at no cost to the public, that contains at least a list of each entity that has applied for a grant under this section, a description of each application, the status of each such application, the name of each entity receiving funds made available pursuant to this section, the purpose for which such entity is receiving such funds, *each quarterly report submitted by the entity pursuant to this section*, and such other information sufficient to allow the public to understand and monitor grants awarded under the program.”⁵

The Office of Management and Budget also requires agencies administering grant programs to implement post-award financial and performance reporting for those programs.⁶ Finally, the Department of Commerce’s implementation of OMB’s Uniform Administrative Requirements authorizes NTIA to require performance reports from BTOP grant recipients.⁷

A general description of the performance reporting requirements for recipients of BTOP grants was included in the Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) published on July 9, 2009 for the first round of funding and in the NOFA published on January 26, 2010, for the second round of funding.⁸ NTIA needs performance reporting information specific to Infrastructure and Comprehensive Community Infrastructure (CCI), Public Computer Center (PCC), and

⁴ See Recovery Act § 6001(a)-(b), 123 Stat. at 512-13.

⁵ See *id.* § 6001(i)(5), 123 Stat. at 515 (emphasis added).

⁶ See OMB Circular A-102, *Grants and Cooperative Agreements with State and Local Governments*, § 2(a) (REVISED 10/7/94, As Further Amended 8/29/97) (OMB Circular A-102); OMB Circular A-110, *Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations*, Subpart C, § 21 (REVISED 11/19/93, As Further Amended 9/30/99) (OMB Circular A-110); OMB Circular A-136, *Financial Reporting Requirements* § II.3 (REVISED 6/10/09) (OMB Circular A-136).

⁷ See Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit and Commercial Organizations, 15 C.F.R. Part 14; Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, 15 C.F.R. Part 24.

⁸ See Broadband Initiatives Program and Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) and Solicitation of Applications, 74 Fed. Reg. 33104, 33122-24 (July 9, 2009) (“First NOFA”); Broadband Technology Opportunities Program, Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) and Solicitation of Applications, 75 Fed. Reg. 3792, 3810-11 (Jan. 22, 2010) (“Second NOFA”).

Sustainable Broadband Adoption (SBA) projects in order to effectively monitor, manage and evaluate the program.

2. Explain how, by whom, how frequently, and for what purpose the information will be used. If the information collected will be disseminated to the public or used to support information that will be disseminated to the public, then explain how the collection complies with all applicable Information Quality Guidelines.

NTIA will collect information on the performance of individual BTOP awards through quarterly and annual performance progress reports (PPRs). The quarterly performance progress reports, submitted at the end of each quarter of the calendar year, ask a series of questions that broadly address project progress and monitoring needs of program personnel by obtaining actual information on quarterly and cumulative project and milestone progress, and potential project barriers, if any. The annual performance progress report, submitted at the end of the calendar year, asks a series of questions that broadly address BTOP programmatic objectives and outcomes, NOFA requirements, and the information needs of external audiences, such as OMB. This includes information on:

- Broadband Infrastructure and CCI – Subscribers passed and served, improved vs. new access for subscribers, pricing plans and broadband speeds available to subscribers, and community anchor institutions served.
- PCC – Hours of operation, speed of broadband service, average number of users per week, training provided, equipment deployed, workstations available.
- SBA – Awareness campaigns, training provided, equipment deployed, broadband subscription rates.⁹

NTIA administers the BTOP grant awards focusing on programmatic and policy issues. NTIA coordinates with the grants management offices of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to conduct grants administration. NOAA is responsible for all Infrastructure and CCI awards and NIST for PCC and SBA awards. BTOP program and grant managers across these agencies will use grant recipient performance reports to:

- Monitor the progress of all awards towards achieving project goals as well as one or more statutory purposes of ARRA.¹⁰
- Assess the overall project management health of each BTOP award. For example: Are recipients meeting their goals and objectives as stated in the grant award? Are recipients on track to meet key milestones and complete the project on schedule?¹¹

⁹ See *BTOP Recipient Handbook FY 2010, Recipient Reporting*, ch. 5(Nov. 2010), http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/files/Recipient_Handbook_v1.1_11-9-10_Final.pdf.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *Id.*

- Determine the level of monitoring and – if necessary – assistance required for funded projects.¹²

Finally, NTIA will make performance reporting information available to the public through a searchable online database, pursuant to the Recovery Act and the BTOP NOFA. On a quarterly basis, NTIA will also publicly post a data extract in Excel format that contains a subset of key metrics and performance data from each report. Recipients' proprietary information will remain confidential and will not be included in this database.¹³

NTIA has taken special steps to ensure the maximum utility, accuracy, integrity, and objectivity of the information to be collected in accordance with NTIA's published Information Quality Guidelines.¹⁴ Program Officers and Grants Officers will verify the accuracy of performance reporting information submitted by recipients through monitoring activities. These activities will include frequent communication with recipients and may, under certain circumstances, also include desk reviews of reports and/or site visits.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological techniques or other forms of information technology.

NTIA will have grant recipients submit their performance progress reports through a post-award monitoring database/document transfer system.

The post-award monitoring system will allow grant recipients to submit program-specific performance and financial reports.¹⁵ The system was launched in July 2010, and recipients started submitting supports through this system for the quarter ending July 30, 2010 in August 2010. It will interface with the BTOP application database as well as NIST and NOAA's grants management systems. Using data from these sources, will populate relevant sections of grant recipient reports so that grant recipients will not be forced to re-enter information that exists elsewhere. Grant recipients will also be able to download PDF versions of reporting forms. The forms have fillable fields and users may save the forms and submit them electronically.

If any grant recipients have difficulty submitting their reports online, NTIA will work with them to find alternative methods of submission (e.g., by mail).

¹² *Id.*

¹³ See Recovery Act § 6001(i)(5), 123 Stat. at 515; Second NOFA, 75 Fed. Reg. at 3811.

¹⁴ See *Section 515 Standards: Guidelines for Ensuring and Maximizing the Quality, Objectivity, Utility, and Integrity of Information Disseminated by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration*, available at www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/occ/ntiaiqguidelines_09252002.htm (Sept. 25, 2002).

¹⁵ Recovery Act reports are submitted separately.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

NTIA has taken care to ensure that reporting forms will not ask for information already submitted by grant recipients in their applications. Also, as previously mentioned, the post-award monitoring system will populate relevant fields of reports with information from NIST and NOAA's grant management systems as well as the BTOP application database.

BTOP performance progress reports ask specific questions relating to BTOP awards and their operational performance. The main objective of the performance report is to capture key data and information that are specific to BTOP and each recipient award.¹⁶ This information can only be collected from recipients, and is not available elsewhere.

5. If the collection of information involves small businesses or other small entities, describe the methods used to minimize the burden.

BTOP grant recipients include a variety of small entities, including schools, local governments, libraries, and for-profit and non-profit companies. All BTOP grant recipients are under the same performance reporting obligations. If necessary, however, NTIA may grant deadline extensions. Recipients will need to work with their Program and Grants Officers to seek approval for a reporting extension.

6. Describe the consequences to the Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently.

If it does not require quarterly reports from BTOP grant recipients, NTIA will not be able to fulfill regulatory and statutory requirements imposed by OMB, the Recovery Act, and Department of Commerce's implementation of OMB's Uniform Administrative Requirements.¹⁷ In addition, NTIA is obligated by the Recovery Act to make post-award project performance information available to the public through an online database.¹⁸

In addition, NTIA must conduct this collection in order to gather specific information on BTOP recipients' use of funds, the impact of their projects on their service areas, and the effectiveness

¹⁶ See *BTOP Recipient Handbook FY 2010, Recipient Reporting*, ch. 5(Nov. 2010), available at http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/files/Recipient_Handbook_v1.1_11-9-10_Final.pdf.

¹⁷ See, e.g., Recovery Act, § 6001(i)(5) 123 Stat. at 515; OMB Circular A-102, § 2(a); OMB Circular A-110, Subpart C, § 21; OMB Circular A-136, § II.3; see also Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit and Commercial Organizations, 15 C.F.R. Part 14; Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, 15 C.F.R. Part 24.

¹⁸ See Recovery Act, § 6001 (i)(5) 123 Stat. at 515; First NOFA, 74 Fed. Reg. at 33122-24; Second NOFA, 75 Fed. Reg. at 3811; Department of Commerce Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants, § 14.53(f).

of the BTOP program as a whole. Reviewing grant recipient reports for timeliness and accuracy is an essential part of the monitoring process: BTOP program and grants managers use information from reports to determine the level of monitoring and, if necessary, corrective action required for individual grants.

7. Explain any special circumstances that require the collection to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with OMB guidelines.

This information collection will be conducted in a manner consistent with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidelines.

8. Provide information of the PRA Federal Register notice that solicited public comments on the information collection prior to this submission. Summarize the public comments received in response to that notice and describe the actions taken by the agency in response to those comments. Describe the efforts to consult with persons outside the agency to obtain their views on the availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and recordkeeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on the data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

A Federal Register Notice soliciting public comment was published on September 15, 2010 (Volume 75, pg. 56057). No comments were received in response to this notice.

NOAA and NIST are assisting NTIA with the development and implementation of program and grants management for BTOP. In addition, NTIA engaged the services of Booz Allen Hamilton to support the development of the post-award management process, including the associated forms (the quarterly and annual PPRs), and to calculate burden estimates for the program.

9. Explain any decisions to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or recipients.

NTIA will not provide gifts or payments to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy.

NTIA will protect confidential and proprietary information in performance and financial reports from public disclosure to the fullest extent authorized by applicable law, including the “Freedom of Information Act,” as amended (5 U.S.C. § 552 *et seq.*), the “Trade Secrets Act,” as amended (18 U.S.C. § 1905 *et seq.*), and the “Economic Espionage Act of 1996,” as amended (18 U.S.C. § 1831 *et seq.*).

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private.

Not applicable.

12. Provide an estimate in hours of the burden of the collection of information.

NTIA developed burden estimates for the quarterly and annual reports in each funding category (Infrastructure and CCI, PCC, and SBA) based on an activity breakdown analysis of the reporting forms. A team of consultants reviewed the forms in detail. Each individual on the team estimated how much time it would take for them to perform the following activities:

- Reviewing instructions;
- Collecting and processing information;
- Adjusting existing practices to comply with the rules of the information collection;
- Searching data sources;
- Completing and reviewing the response (on a field-by-field basis); and
- Transmitting or disclosing the information.

The analysis team then averaged out their hour burden estimates for each activity to produce a final activity breakdown, which added up to the hour burden for individual forms in each funding category. NTIA awarded 233 grants in total, with awards – and subsequently respondents to this collection – being divided among the three funding categories as outlined in the tables on the following page.¹⁹

Infrastructure and Comprehensive Community Infrastructure (123 respondents)				
Type of Form	Annual Responses Required	Total Responses Expected	Hour Burden Per Response	Aggregate Hour Burden
Quarterly Report	4	492	5.02	2,468
Annual Report	1	123	3.94	484
TOTAL	5	615	4.80 (Average)	2,952

¹⁹ These estimates describe individual and aggregate burden on an annual basis, not for the entire period of performance.

Public Computer Center (65 respondents)				
Type of Form	Annual Responses Required	Total Responses Expected	Hour Burden Per Response	Aggregate Hour Burden
Quarterly Report	4	260	4.57	1,188
Annual Report	1	65	2.23	145
TOTAL	5	325	4.1 (Average)	1,333

Sustainable Broadband Adoption (45 respondents)				
Type of Form	Annual Responses Required	Total Responses Expected	Hour Burden Per Response	Aggregate Hour Burden
Quarterly Report	4	180	3.97	715
Annual Report	1	45	3.04	137
TOTAL	5	225	3.78 (Average)	851

Total Responses and Hour Burden for this Collection (233 respondents)		
Project Category	Total Responses	Aggregate Hour Burden
Comprehensive Community Infrastructure	615	2,952
Public Computer Center	325	1,333
Sustainable Broadband Adoption	225	851
TOTAL	1,165	5,137

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to the respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection (excluding the value of the burden hours in Question 12 above).

There is no additional cost burden to the respondents resulting from this collection of information.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government.

The costs to the federal government for this information collection also will include: (1) NTIA staffing; (2) Contract Services to support grants processing and monitoring; (3) Grants Office

Services to make financial awards; and (4) other related expenses. The administrative budget ceiling in the Recovery Act for BTOP equals \$141 million.

This is a recurring collection of limited cost to NTIA. NTIA will collect and store the information in electronic format for a maximum of 1,165 responses annually and will not need to acquire additional information systems for the collection and storage of the data. Therefore, costs associated with printing, equipment, and support services are incidental to general NTIA administrative and infrastructure costs. The cost to review responses is a small portion of the salaries of staff time assigned to the program. Total annual staff time is not expected to exceed 1,165 hours, which is less than 2% of total program staff time

Estimated Cost: 1,165 hours annually at \$55 per hour (based on GS-14 staff salary) = **\$64,075**.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments.

Below is a summary of revisions to the performance progress reports (program changes). As noted below, the revisions will improve the quality of the data collected, eliminate unnecessary burden, and produce information more closely tailored to NTIA’s monitoring needs.

Form and Question	Revision	Reason
All PPR forms, many questions	Increase the word limits for many questions.	Feedback from recipients and federal staff indicated that recipients would prefer additional space to respond.
All PPR forms, instruction section	Clarify the meaning of many metrics.	Clarifying the information requested will reduce recipient confusion and improve the quality of the data that NTIA receives.
All PPR forms, “General Information,” Question 3	Delete request for Employer Identification Number	NTIA determined that this information is not necessary.
Annual PPR for Infrastructure/CCI, “Overall Project Performance Indicators,” Question 2	Conform text of question to the text in the instructions section and the information requested in the table below.	NTIA made this change to correct a clerical error.
Annual PPR for Infrastructure/CCI, “Overall Project Performance Indicators,” Question 3	Add request for information about parties the recipient is negotiating with or to whom the recipient has denied a request for interconnection.	NTIA needs to collect this information to monitor compliance and inform external stakeholders about the interconnection policies of BTOP Infrastructure and CCI recipients.

Form and Question	Revision	Reason
Annual PPR for Infrastructure/CCI, "Overall Project Performance Indicators," Question 3	Remove request for names of specific providers with whom recipient has executed new agreements.	Recipients frequently consider this information sensitive and confidential, and NTIA does not believe that it is necessary for monitoring purposes to collect this information from every Infrastructure and CCI recipient.
Annual PPR for Infrastructure/CCI, "Overall Project Performance Indicators," Question 4	Request the total number of anchor institutions in the service area instead of the number of anchor institutions "passed."	NTIA believes that the information elicited by the revised has the same utility as the information elicited by the original question, but the revised question is less likely to be misinterpreted by recipients.
Annual PPR for Infrastructure/CCI, "Overall Project Performance Indicators," Question 7	Add request for information about limitations on consumer access to lawful content, service provider, or application, or preventing consumers from attaching legal devices to the network.	NTIA needs to collect this information to monitor compliance and inform external stakeholders about the nondiscrimination policies of BTOP recipients.
Annual PPR for Infrastructure/CCI, "Overall Project Performance Indicators," Question 9	Change the request for the number of fiber strands to a request for the number of strand-miles.	NTIA believes that this change will provide more useful information about project impact without significantly increasing the burden on recipients.
Quarterly PPR for Infrastructure/CCI, "Overall Project Performance Indicators," Question 9	Instruct recipients to list all anchor institutions connected during the quarter, instead of all anchor institutions connected since award inception.	NTIA believes that requiring a cumulative listing of institutions connected is unnecessary because the institutions connected in previous quarters should be listed in those quarters' reports.
Annual PPR for Public Computer Centers, "Project Indicators," Question 7b	Delete Question 7b	Although this information would be useful, NTIA is concerned that many recipients will not have it available because collection of this data was not requested in the application.
Quarterly PPR for Public Computer Centers, "Project Indicators (This Quarter)" and "Project Indicators (Next Quarter)," Question 2	Split the space for the narrative response into separate lines for each milestone.	This format will enable recipients to align their narratives to the milestones to which they relate.

Form and Question	Revision	Reason
Quarterly PPR for Public Computer Centers, “Project Indicators (This Quarter),” Question 4b	Clarify that “average users per week” should not be reported cumulatively.	NTIA believes that the revised calculation will be easier for recipients, and the result will be easier for NTIA and others to interpret.
Quarterly PPR for Public Computer Centers, “Project Indicators (This Quarter),” Question 4e	Request the number of hours that existing <u>and</u> new PCCs are open to the public as a result of BTOP funds.	Including both new and existing PCCs aligns this metric with projections made by the applicants during due diligence.
Quarterly PPR for Sustainable Broadband Adoption, “Project Indicators (This Quarter)” and “Project Indicators (Next Quarter),” Question 2	Split the space for the narrative response into separate lines for each milestone.	This format will enable recipients to align their narratives to the milestones to which they relate.
Quarterly PPR for Sustainable Broadband Adoption, “Project Indicators (This Quarter),” Question 4a	Request that recipients report the number of business and institutional subscribers separately from the number of household subscribers.	NTIA expects that recipients will count household subscribers separately from business and institutional subscribers, consistent with the information requested in the application and due diligence. Collecting these totals separately will provide significantly more meaningful information about the overall impact of each project and the program as a whole.
Quarterly PPR for Sustainable Broadband Adoption, “Project Indicators (This Quarter),” Question 4d	Request information about community anchor institutions receiving discounted broadband service, in addition to households and businesses receiving such service.	NTIA needs to collect this information to monitor project performance against information provided in the application.

The adjustment decrease is based on a reduction of respondents/responses.

16. For collections whose results will be published, outline the plans for tabulation and publication.

As announced in the NOFA for the second round of BTOP funding and mentioned in the answer to Question 2, information from grant recipients’ performance reports will be made available to the public via a searchable online database with report data from the post-award monitoring

system.²⁰ BTOP recipient reporting data will be available within 60 days of the quarter end date at <http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/GrantsAwarded>.

NTIA is required to make publicly available on the Internet a list of each entity that has applied for a grant, a description of each application, the status of each application, the name of each entity receiving funds, the purpose for which the entity is receiving the funds, each quarterly report, and other information as the Assistant Secretary deems necessary to meet BTOP objectives.²¹ As noted above in Question 2, on a quarterly basis, NTIA will also publicly post a data extract in Excel format that contacts a subset of key metrics and performance data from each report.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons why display would be inappropriate.

Not applicable. The expiration date for OMB approval will be displayed on the paper and electronic versions of the applications.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement.

No exceptions are requested.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

The collection of information will not employ statistical methods.

²⁰ See Second NOFA, 75 Fed. Reg. at 3811.

²¹ See Recovery Act § 6001(i)(5), 123 Stat. at 515.