2012 SUPPORTING STATEMENT
1890 Land-Grant Institutions: Rural Entrepreneurial Outreach and Development Initiative Program
OMB No. 0570-0041

A. Justification

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

For the past several years, approximately $1.5 million in competitive cooperative agreement funds were allocated from the annual appropriations for Rural Development for the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions: Rural Entrepreneurial Outreach and Development Initiative Program. The Agency anticipates similar funding for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2011. The mission of Rural Development is to enhance the quality of life for rural Americans by providing leadership in building competitive businesses, including sustainable cooperatives that can prosper in the global marketplace. Rural Development meets these goals by investing financial resources and providing technical assistance to cooperatives and other businesses located in rural communities and establishing strategic alliances and partnerships that leverage public, private, and cooperative resources to create jobs and stimulate rural economic activity.

The primary purposes of this funding are to encourage 1890 Institutions to provide technical assistance for business creation in economically challenged rural communities, to conduct educational programs that develop and improve upon the professional skills of rural entrepreneurs, and to provide outreach and promote USDA Rural Development programs in small rural communities with the greatest economic need.

Furthermore, Rural Development will use the funding through cooperative agreements with the 1890 Institutions to strengthen the capacity of these communities to undertake innovative, comprehensive, citizen-led, long-term strategies for community and economic development.

The funds will be awarded on a competitive basis using specific selection criteria. A public notice will be issued each fiscal year inviting proposals. Funds will be awarded in amounts up to 75 percent of the costs for carrying out the outreach initiative projects. Rural Development has authority to enter into cooperative agreements pursuant to 7 U.S.C. 2204b(b)(4) and Executive Order 13532 (February 26, 2010), “President’s Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.”

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the Agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

The various forms and narrative requirements contained within this notice will be collected from all applicants, specifically 1890 Land-Grant Institutions and Tuskegee University. This information will be used for determining such factors as: (1) eligibility; (2) the specific purpose for which the funds will be utilized; (3) timeframes or dates by which activities surrounding the use of funds will be accomplished; (4) feasibility of the project; (5) applicant's experience in managing similar activities; and (6) the effectiveness and innovation used to address critical issues vital to the development and sustainability of businesses, job creation, loans packaged, business information system network, and infrastructure development as a means of improving the quality of life in America's rural communities.

Without the collection of this information, there would be no basis on which to award funds. Proposals will be submitted to RBS for administrative handling, evaluation, and processing.

A summary of the reporting burden to be cleared with this request is described as follows:

FORMS APPROVED WITH THIS DOCKET

Form SF-425, "Federal Financial Report"

This form must be completed by the funded recipient certifying that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, this report is correct and complete and that all outlays and unliquidated obligations are for the purposes set forth in the award document.

Form SF-270, "Request For Advance or Reimbursement"

This form must be completed by the funded recipient certifying that, to the best of its knowledge and belief, the data submitted are correct, that all outlays were made in accordance with the grant conditions or other agreement, and that payment is due and has not been previously requested.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS-NO-FORMS

Project Proposal:

All applicants must submit a project proposal containing the elements described in the notice and in the format prescribed. This allows for in-depth evaluation, as well as for consistency, organization, and clarity. The elements of the proposal are:

Completed Forms:

(i) Form SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance"

(ii) Form SF-424A, "Budget Information -- Non-Construction Programs"

(iii) Form SF-424B, "Assurances -- Non-Construction Programs"

Table of Contents: For ease of locating information, each proposal must contain a detailed Table of Contents immediately following the required forms. The Table of Contents should include page numbers for each component of the proposal. Pagination should begin immediately following the Table of Contents.

Project Executive Summary: A summary of the Project Proposal, not to exceed one page.

Project Proposal: The application must contain a narrative statement describing the nature of the proposed outreach initiative. The Proposal must include at least the following:

(i) Project Title Page: Should include the following: title of the project, names of principal investigators, and applicant organization.

(ii) Introduction: A concisely worded justification or rationale for the outreach initiative must be presented. Included should be a summarization of social and economical statistical data (income, population, employment rate, poverty rate, education attainment, etc.) of the target area which substantiates the need for the outreach initiative. Note in this section if the target area includes an Empowerment Zone/Enterprise or Champion Community.

(iii) Goals and Objectives of the Project: Identify and discuss the specific goals and objectives of the project and the impact of the outreach initiative on end-users.

(iv) Workplan: Discuss the approach (strategy) to be used in carrying out the proposed outreach initiative and accomplishing the objectives. A description of any subcontracting arrangements to be used in carrying out the project must be included.

(v) Timeframe: A tentative schedule for conducting the major steps of the outreach initiative must be included.

(vi) Milestones: Describe and quantify the expected outcome of the specific outreach objective, including jobs created or assisted, conferences and seminars conducted, and number of participants, loans packaged, etc.

(vii) Estimated Budget: Detail budget justification including matching funds.

(viii) Leveraging Funds: Other institutional support of this outreach initiative project.

(ix) Coordination and Management Plan: Describe how the project will be coordinated among various participants, nature of the collaborations, and benefits to participants, the communities, the applicant, and RBS. Describe plans for management of the project to ensure its proper and efficient administration. Describe scope of RBS involvement in the project.

(x) Technology Outreach: The proposal should address the applicant's ability to establish and maintain a computer network system linking community leaders and residents to available economic development information.

(xi) Key Personnel Support: The proposal should include a curriculum-vitae for the principal investigator and each key support personnel.

(xii) Facilities or Equipment: Where the project will be located (housed) and other equipment needed to carry out the specific objectives of the project.

(xiii) Local and USDA Rural Development State Office Support: Letters of support from the local community, such as businesses, local government, community based organization, including any letter from the appropriate USDA Rural Development State Office.

(xiv) Certification of Matching Funds: Certify that matching funds will be available at the same time Federal funds are anticipated to be spent and that matching funds will be spent in advance of Federal funding.

(xv) Previous Accomplishments: Summarize the institution's previous outreach and development accomplishments work funded by USDA Rural Development experiences.

(xvi) Additional Information: Provide any additional information that demonstrates commitment for tangible resources and supports the applicant's proposal.

FORMS APPROVED UNDER OTHER BURDEN PACKAGES

Form SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance" (OMB No. 4040-0004)

This is a standard form used by applicants as a requirement for pre-applications and applications submitted for Federal assistance.

Form SF-424A, "Budget Information-Non-Construction Programs" (OMB No. 4040-0006)

This form must be completed by applicants to show the project's anticipated budget breakdown in terms of expense categories and division of Federal and non-Federal sources of funds. Identifying the project's requested funding by expense category is necessary to assure that the expense is for the successful conduct of the project, is allowable under applicable Federal cost principles, and is not prohibited under any applicable Federal statute or regulation.

Form SF-424B, "Assurances-Non-Construction Programs" (OMB No. 4040-0007)

This form must be completed by applicants' to provide the Federal Government certain assurances of the applicant's legal authority to apply for Federal assistance and financial capability to pay the non-Federal share of project costs. The applicant also assures compliance with various legal and regulatory requirements as described in the form.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Funded recipients will be required to submit written project performance reports on a quarterly basis, as well as a summary on an annual or end of project basis. The project performance reports will include, but are not limited to: (1) a comparison of actual accomplishments to established objectives; (2) subject and title of seminars, workshops, and conferences held and number of participants, including an attached sign-in roster; (3) number and type of businesses assisted or developed and number of jobs created or retained; (4) a list of successful practices posted on the computer network system and identification of successful and unsuccessful use of the computer in the community (field); (5) problems, delays, or adverse conditions which will materially affect attainment of planned project objectives; (6) list and discussion of new initiatives, individuals, and organizational groups identified as a result of the outreach effort that could be assisted if resources were available; (7) discuss collaboration with the RBS State Office, if any; and (8) status of compliance with any special conditions on the use of awarded funds.

RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS

Regulations require that financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other records pertinent to the award will be retained for a period of at least 3 years after the agreement closing. The exception that records will be retained beyond 3 years is if audit findings have not been resolved.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection.

Improved information technology may be used by applicants. However, all applicants may not have the technological expertise for electronic submission of required materials. Therefore, RBS does not consider it economically justifiable to require submission by electronic methods. Also, the collection of information required by this notice is minimal and is more a synopsis of applicant activities and original documents that do not lend themselves to technological collection techniques. Applicants who receive funding will be encouraged but not required to submit quarterly progress reports electronically.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information

already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

Each project proposal is unique and specifically written for this solicitation; therefore no duplication is possible for this burden. However, the Agency has reviewed all programs it administers to determine which programs may be similar in intent and purpose. The Agency has several programs that are similarly administered as grants and cooperative agreements. If there was simultaneous participation in more than one Agency program, the Agency would make every effort to accommodate the requests within the same set of applications and processing forms.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities (Item 5 of OMB Form 83-1), describe any methods used to minimize the burden.

The information to be collected is in a format to minimize the paperwork of small businesses or entities. However, no small businesses or small entities would be burdened since the only applicants are institutions of higher education. The information collected is the minimum needed by the Agency to approve awards and monitor recipient performance.

6. Describe the consequences to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The information to be collected is a one-time event to provide the information to be used in determining applicant eligibility and for the awarding of funds for the current fiscal year. Without the one-time application, the Agency would have no basis for making the award. Quarterly reporting by the recipients is necessary to monitor performance. Reports will be submitted in written narrative form. Receiving progress reports less frequently than quarterly limits the Agency’s assurance that cooperators are providing services in accordance with the approved cooperative agreement.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

a. Requiring respondents to report information more than quarterly. There are no information requirements that require specific reporting on more than a quarterly basis.

b. Requiring written responses in less than 30 days. There are no information requirements that require specific reporting in less than 30 days.

c. Requiring more than an original and two copies. There are no information requirements that require more than an original and two copies.

d. Requiring respondents to retain records for more than 3 years. There are no requirements to retain records for more than 3 years, unless an audit finding has not been resolved.

e. Not utilizing statistical sampling. There are no such requirements.

f. Requiring use of statistical sampling which has not been reviewed and approved by OMB. There are no such requirements.

g. Requiring a pledge of confidentiality. There are no such requirements.

h. Requiring submission of proprietary trade secrets. There are no such requirements.

8. If applicable, identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the Agency's notice soliciting comments on the information collection. Summarize public comments received and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Describe 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 record keeping, disclosure, reporting format (if any), and on data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

As required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, a 60-day Notice was published in the Federal Register on April 25, 2012 [Vol. 77, No. 80, page number 24678]. No comments were received.

The following people and organizations have been continuously consulted on the various aspects of collecting information for this program throughout the years. For this particular submission, they offered no comments.

Mr. Andrew Williams
USDA, NRCS
Montgomery, AL 36106
Phone No. 334-872-2684

Dr. Samuel L. Donald
Regional Research Director
Prince Anne, MD 21853
Phone No. 410-651-7735

Dr. Magid Dager
Alcorn State University
Lorman, MS 39096
Phone No. 601-877-3934

9. Explain any decision to provide payments or gifts to respondents, other than reenumeration of contractors or grantees.

No payments or gifts are provided to respondents.

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

It is not Agency policy to provide copies of submitted applications to others. Specific information that would be deemed confidential, such as business financial information, is not provided outside of the Agency. Certain portions of the application and nature of the project may be requested under the Freedom of Information Act, but the released material would be edited to maintain confidentiality.

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

There will be no collection of any information that would be considered sensitive in nature or commonly considered private.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

A maximum of eighteen respondents (applicants) is anticipated for this collection of information in which approximately fifteen will be funded. There are six burden elements required in the initial application process and four additional burden elements required for the fifteen funded applicants. Please see the attached spreadsheet for the detailed information.

13. Provide an estimate of the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information.

There are no startup costs involved.

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

The estimated annualized cost to the Federal Government is $100,127.64. A total of 1,956 hours is estimated for processing applications, preparing award documents, and monitoring awards.

Activity	No. of Applications	Hours	Rate	Total
Acknowledge and Review Applications	18	1	$51.19	$921.42
Evaluate and Score	18	15	$51.19	$13,821.30
Inform Applicants of Selection Results	18	1	$51.19	$921.42
Legal Document Preparation	15	8	$51.19	$6,142.80
Review Third Party Documents	15	5	$51.19	$3,839.25
Release and Advance of Funds	15	12	$51.19	$9,214.20
Monitor Awards	15	50	$51.19	$38,392.50
Administrative	15	35	$51.19	$26,874.75

TOTAL	$100,127.64

*51.19 is the hourly rate for a GS-13, Step 7. This rate reflects the benefit of locality adjustment for Washington-Baltimore-Northern Virginia.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-1.

The number of respondents remain the same. Since the previous submission SF-269 has been discontinued by OMB and replaced with SF-425. With the change in form use the agency is now accounting for its own burden hours for SF-425 along with SF-270. Therefore, there is an adjustment increase of 113 burden hours (615 to 728) attributed to this change. Also, there is an adjustment decrease of -54 responses from 297 to 243. This adjustment is to correct the double counting of responses in the last submission for SF-424, 424A and 424B that are already accounted for in other OMB approved collection numbers.

16. For collection of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication.

Upon completion of the project, recipients will deliver an annual or end of project report summarizing accomplishments from the outreach activities during the year. Cooperative Programs reserves publishing rights to such documents. No information or data of a proprietary nature will be published. Documents may be published as handbooks, training manuals, or other formats, as appropriate.

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

No such approval is being sought as there are no Rural Development forms associated with this package.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in Item 19 on OMB 83-1.

There are no exceptions to the certification.

19. How is this information collection related to the Service Center Initiative (SCI)? Will the information collection be part of the one stop shopping concept?

This information collection is not related to the Service Center Initiative as it is administered through Headquarters.