



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Assistant Secretary for Economic Development
Washington, D.C. 20230

December 23, 2014

Mr. Alexander T. Hunt
Chief, Information Policy Branch
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
725 Seventeenth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Hunt:

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) requests Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval to submit the information collection described herein under the “emergency processing” provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. § 3507(j)(1); 5 C.F.R. § 1320.13). EDA is requesting clearance for a new information collection entitled “FY15 IMCP Federal Interagency Competition Electronic Application Tool.” We respectfully request OMB approval for this collection of information by January 5, 2015.

The Investing in Communities Partnership (IMCP) is a government-wide initiative to help communities cultivate an environment for businesses to create well-paying manufacturing jobs in regions across the country and thereby accelerate the resurgence of manufacturing. For a second time, EDA will be coordinating an inter-agency competition to designate up to 12 communities as “Manufacturing Communities” through the IMCP. The competition will be announced through a Federal Register Notice (FRN) that will outline the proposal submission requirements and the eligibility/selection criteria that will be used to evaluate the proposals. Those applicants designated as Manufacturing Communities will be eligible for benefits including preferential consideration for a range of future economic development funding and technical assistance offered by IMCP participating agencies.

Overall, the first round of the IMCP competition was a major success. However, application information was collected via email, fax and mail submissions which created an inefficient process for review and evaluation. By contrast, applicants in this round will be required to submit their applications electronically. The FY15 IMCP Federal Interagency Competition Application Tool, to be administered by OMB, provides for a more streamlined and user friendly application process. To apply, applicants can access a link to the application tool that is located on the EDA public website (<http://www.eda.gov>). On the front end, the online tool will allow applicants to provide required information through a series of prompts and screens as well as attach relevant documents. In addition, on the back end information will be stored in a database that will greatly facilitate the review and evaluation process.

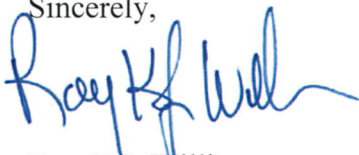
IMCP Participating agencies, stakeholders and prospective applicants are expecting the competition to begin in early January 2015, but the competition cannot proceed without the application tool. Thus, if normal clearance procedures are followed, the competition will be significantly delayed, to the detriment of eligible communities throughout the country. As such, EDA is seeking emergency processing and approval of the "FY15 IMCP Federal Interagency Competition Electronic Application Tool" because the use of normal clearance procedures is reasonably likely to prevent or disrupt the collection of information (5 C.F.R 1320.13 (2)(iii)).

EDA is seeking a waiver of the notice and comment period required in the Federal Register requesting public comment on the information collection requirements due to the emergency nature of this request. EDA will conduct the necessary submission requirements required by the PRA after approval of this emergency request.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) is the primary federal agency that assists small businesses. More information about SBA programs can be found at www.sba.gov. In addition, information on all available federal grant programs can be found in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, available online at www.cfda.gov.

Thank you again for your consideration and assistance.

Sincerely,



Roy K.J. Williams
Assistant Secretary of Commerce
for Economic Development