



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

WASHINGTON, DC 20410-5000

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING

July 9, 2018

Mr. Joe Nye
OMB Desk Officer
Office of Management and Budget
New Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Nye:

The Department of Housing and Urban Development-Office of Native American Programs (ONAP) is seeking authorization to pursue emergency processing procedures to meet the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) requirements for a new source of competitive funding awarded under the Native American Housing Block Grants (NAHBG) program. We believe that emergency processing for the unexpected NAHBG competitive funds enables ONAP to meet its essential mission of ensuring that safe, decent and affordable housing is available to Native American families, thus fostering the creation of economic opportunities for tribal residents. If approved, this new information collection would allow ONAP to publish its Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) by the end of the 2018 calendar year and begin collecting grant proposals from eligible recipients.

In the “Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018” (H.R. 1625-669), Congress provided an additional amount of \$100,000,000 for competitive grants to eligible recipients authorized under the Native American Housing and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4111 et seq.). The distribution of these funds is a Departmental priority. The immediate need for this additional funding and the severe housing shortage in Indian Country is well documented in HUD’s Native American Housing Needs Study which identifies substandard housing and overcrowding living conditions at alarming levels. This influx of \$100,000,000 is essential to fostering much needed affordable housing-related projects for tribal communities. As such, the Department’s goal is to solicit competitive proposals by the end of the calendar year so that funds would be awarded in spring of 2019.

The Department believes that the competitive funding for NAHBG meets the emergency processing criteria of 5 CFR §1320.13. The Department believes that the appropriations language meets the “unanticipated event” criteria of 5 CFR §1320.13 because this additional funding creates an entirely new competitive grant to supplement the traditional formula-based block grant program of NAHASDA.

Furthermore, the Department believes that the information collection associated with this competitive NOFA warrants emergency processing because following the regular PRA schedule would impede both the intent of this additional appropriation and HUD’s goal to get funding to Native American communities in an expedited manner. The “Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018” also directs the Department to give priority to projects that will “spur construction and rehabilitation for grantees” and the additional amount would “remain available until September

30, 2022.” For example, construction projects in Indian County can take three to five years from start to completion. Following an expedited emergency processing time frame would maximize the limited period of availability given by Congress for recipients to implement projects as soon as possible.

If approved, the Department will proceed with preparing an emergency processing package. The package would include a Federal Register notice requesting a 21-day comment period, form OMB-83i, supporting statement, and statutory provisions for the appropriation and the NAHBG program. Finally, the Department will proceed with updating the currently approved information collection under the NAHASDA block grant program to incorporate the competitive projects. We would complete the normal OMB review process and post the 60-day and 30-day Federal Register notices following the emergency Federal register notice.

Your prompt response to this request would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your consideration and assistance.

Sincerely,

Frederick Ziefer for

Heidi J. Frechette
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Native American Programs