**Request for Approval under the "Generic Clearance for SBA Customer Experience Data Collections"**
**(OMB Control Number: 3245-0404)**

**TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION: Small Business Administration (SBA) State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) Outcomes Evaluation – Grantee Interviews and Focus Groups**

**PURPOSE:**
*What are you hoping to learn / improve? How do you plan to use what you learn? Include any artifacts your team may develop as a result of this collection.*

The State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) is a competitive grants program that provides financial awards to state and territory governments to assist small businesses with export development. SBA has contracted an evaluation team from 2M Research to conduct interviews and focus groups with current and former STEP grantees for the SBA to understand program implementation and identify best practices that may improve client outcomes.

**TYPE OF ACTIVITY:** (Check one)

[X ] Customer Research
[  ] Customer Feedback Survey *(if selecting this option, include survey instrument tool with this submission)*
[   ] User Testing of Services and Digital Products

**DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY**
1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)
    [ ] Web-based surveys
    [X] Telephone interviews and focus groups
    [  ] In-person
    [  ] Mail

**For Customer Feedback Survey:**
*Explain who will be surveyed and why the group is appropriate for the Federal program / service to connect with. Do you somehow have a list of customers to reach out to (e.g., email addresses of individuals who have visited a service center in the past month)? Please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and if only a sample will be solicited for feedback, how you will select them.*

**DESCRIPTION OF INSTRUMENTS**
*Generally describe the information collection activity – e.g. will facilitators or interviewers be used? What will respondents be asked? Or, what actions will you observe / how will you have respondents interact with a product you need feedback on?*

A senior analyst from the evaluation team will conduct 1-hour, semi-structured Microsoft Teams interviews with a purposive sample of 10 STEP grantees and will conduct two 1-hour Microsoft

Teams focus groups with up to 12 additional grantees who did not participate in interviews. Focus groups will be open on a first-come, first-serve basis. The evaluation team used grantee report data, interviews with SBA STEP program leadership and grants managers, and SBA's initial interviews with high performing STEP grantees to design the protocols and draw the proposed sample of high- and low-performing grantees for the interviews. Interviews and focus groups will be recorded provided permission is received from all participants; a notetaker will also join each call to serve as a backup to the transcription.

The evaluation team will use discussion guides for the interviews and focus groups that ask for the grantees' perspective of STEP, the process for implementing STEP grants in the grantees' states, the grantees' work with small businesses, perspectives on the impact of the program in the grantees' states, and recommendations for SBA. The focus group discussion guide is designed to be more amenable to group discussion; however, the topics in both formats are the same.

**Gifts or Payments:**
Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants?  [  ] Yes [ X ] No

**BURDEN HOURS**

Per individual respondent, we estimate 70 minutes for participation, which includes both recruitment time and response time. Total burden hours for individuals participating in the interviews and focus groups is 11.7 hours and 14 hours, respectively, for a total of 25.7 hours.

| Category of Respondent | No. of Respondents | Participation Time* | Burden |
|---|---|---|---|
| Individuals (STEP grantee interview participants) | 10 | 70 minutes | 11.7 hours |
| Individuals (STEP grantee focus group participants) | 12 | 70 minutes | 14 hours |
| **Totals** | 22 | 1,540 minutes | 25.7 hours |

*Participation time includes recruitment time and response time.

**CERTIFICATION:**

I certify the following to be true:
1. The collections are voluntary;
2. The collections are low-burden for respondents (based on considerations of total burden hours or burden-hours per respondent) and are low-cost for both the respondents and the Federal Government;

3. The collections are non-controversial and do not raise issues of concern to other Federal agencies;
4. Any collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the near future;
5. Personally identifiable information (PII) is collected only to the extent necessary and is not retained;
6. Information gathered is intended to be used for general service improvement and program management purposes
7. Upon agreement between OMB and the agency all or a subset of information may be released as part of A-11, Section 280 requirements on performance.gov. Summaries of customer research and user testing activities may also be included in public-facing agency publications.

Name: Dorrie Roth   _Dorrie Roth_____

Title: Acting CFO_____

**APPENDIX: Data Collection Materials** and **Preliminary Version of Interviews and Surveys**

All instruments used to collect information must include:
OMB Control No. 3245-0404
Expiration Date: 02/28/2021