

2025 SUPPORTING STATEMENT
for
USDA Regional Food Business Centers – The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021
(Pub. L. 116-260)
OMB No. 0581-0335

A. Justification.

1. EXPLAIN THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MAKE THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION NECESSARY. IDENTIFY ANY LEGAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS THAT NECESSITATE THE COLLECTION.

The information collection requirements in this request are needed for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to administer a cooperative agreement program, entitled the Regional Food Business Center Program, under its Transportation and Marketing Program and in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Super Circular) (2 CFR part 200).

AMS requests to extend its current approval to collect information for the Regional Food Business Centers Program. The Regional Food Business Centers Program, authorized and funded by the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, is a partnership between Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and twelve organizations designed to spur business growth, accelerate market development, and enhance supply chain resilience for farms and food businesses across the United States. The Regional Food Business Centers support producers and small food businesses by providing localized assistance to access local and regional supply chains, including linking producers to wholesalers and distributors. The Regional Food Business Centers provide technical assistance needed to access new markets, and to access to federal, state, and local resources, thereby closing the gaps or barriers to market access and increasing competition. In short, these Regional Food Business Centers work to expand access and create linkages to small and mid-sized producers to assist in overcoming barriers faced by many producers.

The legal authority and administrative requirements to carry out the new grant program in this request is as follows:

The Regional Food Business Center Program is authorized pursuant to the authority of Division N, Title VII, subtitle B, Section 751 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (Pub. L. No. 116-260) in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Partnerships of two or more of these entities are eligible recipients: Institutions of higher education, state agencies, tribal governments, economic development corporations, and nonprofit organizations. No cost sharing or matching funds are required. All awards are subject to the terms and conditions, cost principles, and other considerations described in the signed cooperative agreement.

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 Regional Food Business Center Program is voluntary and respondents have applied for this specific competitive cooperative agreement program. In doing so, they provided information, and AMS is the primary user of the information.

The information collected is needed to certify that cooperators are complying with applicable program regulations, and the data collected is the minimum information necessary to effectively carry out the program requirements. The information collection requirements in this request are essential to carry out the intent of section 751 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, to provide the respondents the type of service they request and for AMS to administer this program.

Applicants must have a Unique Entity ID which will be issued by the System for Award Management (SAM.gov).

A small number of forms are specific to this competitive grant program. These forms may have specific programmatic dates, data elements and other information required for this specific grant program. For these reasons, the formatting of this collection lists forms grouped into two subtitles: 1) Standardized Forms for All AMS Financial Assistance Programs; and 2) Competitive AMS Cooperative Agreement Program Forms: Regional Food Business Centers Only.

STANDARDIZED FORMS FOR ALL AMS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The following forms are used by all AMS financial assistance programs (approved under OMB No. 0581-0240) including the Regional Food Business Centers and the responses and burden for each are entered on the AMS-71 under the subtitle “Standardized Forms for All AMS Grant Programs” as one-line entry for Regional Food Business Centers only.

- a. **SF-270 Request for Advance or Reimbursement (approved under OMB No. 4040-0012)** is completed whenever the recipient requests an advance or reimbursement of cooperative agreement funds. The information will be used by AMS to make and keep track of advances and disbursements. The information can be obtained electronically and is collected electronically in the Payment Management Services (PMS). (Responses and burden will be submitted to OMB No. 4040-0012.)
- b. **SF-425 Federal Financial Report** is completed semi-annually alongside the SF-270 and outlines expenditures from the prior six

months. The information is submitted electronically in GrantSolutions. (Responses and burden will be submitted to OMB No. 4040-0012.)

- c. **AMS General Terms and Conditions (Reading)** is a document published by AMS setting forth recipient compliance with terms and conditions of the award and all Federal grant regulations and administrative requirements including 2 CFR part 200. The document also includes recipient assurances and certifications with the incoming application submission; changes in project contacts, leaders, managers, and staff; cost principles; actions that need prior approval; performance monitoring; reporting requirements; and payment requirements. The AMS General Terms and Conditions does not require a signature and may be updated annually to reflect mandatory additions and other changes made by regulatory or OMB requirements. Certain sections of these forms are uniform for every grant program, and while specific programmatic dates and other information varies, this does not affect the underlying PRA burden. This document is available on the AMS website at www.ams.usda.gov. AMS is submitting one form as an example that is representative of what all AMS Grant Programs use.
- d. **AMS Grant Programs Worksheet** is submitted along with each SF-270 request to document the details of requested reimbursed costs shown on the SF-270. The data provided on the Worksheet enables AMS to ensure that the requested reimbursements were part of the approved project budget, and to assess if the project is on track with the approved timeline. The worksheet collects the Grant Agreement Number; Recipient Organization; Recipient Contact; Time Period of the Request; Payee name; Date of Expense; Amount; Assigned Budget Category; and any Notes to explain the expense. The Worksheet is available at the AMS grants website.
- e. **Recordkeeping** is required by AMS for recipients and subrecipients to maintain all records pertaining to the agreement for a period of 3 years after the final financial report has been submitted to AMS, in accordance with Federal recordkeeping regulations. This requirement is provided in 2 CFR § 200.334 and the general award terms and conditions, which are published on the AMS website.

COMPETITIVE AMS COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT PROGRAM: The Regional Food Business Centers Program ONLY

The following forms are used by Regional Food Business Centers and the responses and burden for each are entered on the AMS-71 to cover this program.

- a. **Semi-annual Performance Report** will be submitted no later than 30 calendar days after the performance period expiration date. AMS is submitting a document that shows the information that will be requested on a semi-annual basis.
- b. **Program-Specific Terms and Conditions (Reading)** is a document developed in addition to the AMS General Terms and Conditions. These terms and conditions

specifically apply to the Regional Food Business Centers awards, due to the specific requirements of the program. In the event of an inconsistency between the AMS General Terms and Conditions and the Regional Food Business Centers program specific terms and conditions, this document will take precedence.

AMS has utilized the required documentation to ensure adherence to fiscal policy and programmatic priorities in implementation of the Regional Food Business Centers program. Information has been used to monitor cooperator progress and inform cooperator technical assistance and program implementation.

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. ALSO DESCRIBE ANY CONSIDERATION OF USING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TO REDUCE BURDEN.

AMS financial assistance programs typically employ several online systems (i.e., SAM.gov; Grants.gov; GrantSolutions.gov; and ezFedGrants.gov) to administer its programs from funding opportunity planning through award to grant closeout. These online systems allow grant management specialists, financial and budget staff, and award applicants and recipients to manage all aspects of their grants business and reporting electronically. This helps produce assured compliance with Federal government and agency standards, improves transparency and accountability, shortens processing timelines, and reduces time spent on administrative activities.

Applicants must have a Unique Entity ID issued by the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) registration. AMS utilizes Payment Management Services in conjunction with GrantSolutions.gov financial management systems to process and manage award payments. The system provides significant efficiencies to all users managing grant and agreement portfolios at AMS. Semiannual reporting will be completed through a Qualtrics form, a user-friendly platform that offers significant cost-savings and a flexible platform that many cooperators are familiar with navigating.

4. DESCRIBE EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY DUPLICATION. SHOW SPECIFICALLY WHY ANY SIMILAR INFORMATION ALREADY AVAILABLE CANNOT BE USED OR MODIFIED FOR USE FOR THE PURPOSE(S) DESCRIBED IN ITEM 2 ABOVE.

This program is not maintained by any other Agency; therefore, the requested information will not be available from any other existing records. There is no other program offering the same services to small- to mid-sized food and farm businesses.

5. IF THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION IMPACTS SMALL BUSINESSES OR OTHER SMALL ENTITIES (ITEMS 5 OF THE OMB FORM 83-I), DESCRIBE THE METHODS USED TO MINIMIZE BURDEN.

The Regional Food Business Centers Program is aiming to support small businesses as beneficiaries of the program, but not as the main cooperators.

The act of collecting information for Regional Food Business Centers will not have an adverse impact on small businesses or other small entities. In addition, the information is voluntarily collected from each applicant to receive cooperative agreement funds. To the extent that a small business is a beneficiary of the program, they deliver the same services as larger businesses and maintain similar information.

6. DESCRIBE THE CONSEQUENCE OF FEDERAL PROGRAM OR POLICY ACTIVITIES IF THE COLLECTION IS NOT CONDUCTED OR IS CONDUCTED LESS FREQUENTLY, AS WELL AS ANY TECHNICAL OR LEGAL OBSTACLES TO REDUCING BURDEN.

Regional Food Business Centers will provide financial and technical assistance to small- to mid-sized food businesses that are working to start and expand their businesses.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 authorized the apportionment of \$360 million from fiscal year (FY) 2021 funds, which are available until expended. Without this collection of information, AMS will not be able to monitor compliance with regulations and administer the program.

7. EXPLAIN ANY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THAT WOULD CAUSE AN INFORMATION COLLECTION TO BE CONDUCTED IN A MANNER:

- **REQUIRING RESPONDENTS TO REPORT INFORMATION TO THE AGENCY MORE OFTEN THAN QUARTERLY;**

Respondents are not required to report more than quarterly.

- **REQUIRING RESPONDENTS TO PREPARE A WRITTEN RESPONSE TO A COLLECTION OF INFORMATION IN FEWER THAN 30 DAYS AFTER RECEIPT OF IT;**

Respondents are not required to prepare a written response to a collection of information fewer than 30 days after receipt.

- **REQUIRING RESPONDENTS TO SUBMIT MORE THAN AN ORIGINAL AND TWO COPIES OF ANY DOCUMENT;**

Respondents are not required to submit more than an original and two copies of any document.

- **REQUIRING RESPONDENTS TO RETAIN RECORDS, OTHER THAN HEALTH, MEDICAL, GOVERNMENT CONTRACT, GRANT-IN-AID, OR TAX RECORDS FOR MORE THAN 3 YEARS;**

Respondents are not required to retain any records for more than 3 years. This is part of normal business practice.

- **IN CONNECTION WITH A STATISTICAL SURVEY, THAT IS NOT DESIGNED TO PRODUCE VALID AND RELIABLE RESULTS THAT CAN BE GENERALIZED TO THE UNIVERSE OF STUDY;**

The information collected will not be utilized in connection with a statistical survey.

- **REQUIRING THE USE OF A STATISTICAL DATA CLASSIFICATION THAT HAS NOT BEEN REVIEWED AND APPROVED BY OMB;**

There is no requirement for a statistical data classification.

- **THAT INCLUDES A PLEDGE OF CONFIDENTIALITY THAT IS NOT SUPPORTED BY AUTHORITY ESTABLISHED IN STATUTE OR REGULATION, THAT IS NOT SUPPORTED BY DISCLOSURE AND DATA SECURITY POLICIES THAT ARE CONSISTENT WITH THE PLEDGE, OR WHICH UNNECESSARILY IMPEDES SHARING OF DATA WITH OTHER AGENCIES FOR COMPATIBLE CONFIDENTIAL USE; OR**

No confidential information is collected.

- **REQUIRING RESPONDENTS TO SUBMIT PROPRIETARY TRADE SECRET, OR OTHER CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION UNLESS THE AGENCY CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT IT HAS INSTITUTED PROCEDURES TO PROTECT THE INFORMATION'S CONFIDENTIALITY TO THE EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW.**

Respondents are not required to submit proprietary trade secrets or other confidential information.

- 8. IF APPLICABLE, PROVIDE A COPY AND IDENTIFY THE DATE AND PAGE NUMBER OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER OF THE AGENCY'S NOTICE, REQUIRED BY 5 CFR 1320.8(d), SOLICITING COMMENTS ON THE INFORMATION COLLECTION PRIOR TO SUBMISSION TO OMB. SUMMARIZE**

PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO THAT NOTICE AND DESCRIBE ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE AGENCY IN RESPONSE TO THESE COMMENTS. SPECIFICALLY ADDRESS COMMENTS RECEIVED ON COST AND HOUR BURDEN.

The 60-day notice for public comment on information collection was submitted to the Federal Register for publication and it was posted Tuesday, April 1, 2025 (Vol. 90, No. 61, page 14353). No public comments were submitted.

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 RECORDKEEPING, DISCLOSURE, OR REPORTING FORMAT (IF ANY), AND ON THE DATA ELEMENTS TO BE RECORDED, DISCLOSED, OR REPORTED.

As part of the substantial involvement component of the cooperative agreement, USDA is in close contact with the cooperating entities required to submit program data. Cooperators have frequent opportunities in various formats (both formal and informal, in writing and verbally) to provide input and feedback on programmatic reporting requirements. Their feedback has been used to inform modifications of the reporting tools and platforms (where feasible) to minimize burden and to develop supportive guidance materials to clarify processes and requirements.

CONSULTATION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THOSE FROM WHOM INFORMATION IS TO BE OBTAINED OR THOSE WHO MUST COMPILE RECORDS SHOULD OCCUR AT LEAST ONCE EVERY 3 YEARS – EVEN IF THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION ACTIVITY IS THE SAME AS IN PRIOR PERIODS. THERE MAY BE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT MAY PRECLUDE CONSULTATION IN A SPECIFIC SITUATION. THESE CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD BE EXPLAINED.

AMS cannot identify a circumstance that would preclude consultation with stakeholders.

9. EXPLAIN ANY DECISION TO PROVIDE ANY PAYMENT OR GIFT TO RESPONDENTS, OTHER THAN REMUNERATION OF CONTRACTORS OR GRANTEES.

No payments or gifts are provided to respondents for filling out forms. Payment will be made in the form of a cooperative agreement.

10. DESCRIBE ANY ASSURANCE OF CONFIDENTIALITY PROVIDED TO RESPONDENTS AND THE BASIS FOR THE ASSURNACE IN STATUTE, REGULATION, OR AGENCY POLICY.

The Regional Food Business Centers Program does not request confidential information from respondents and therefore provides no assurances related to confidentiality.

11. PROVIDE ADDITIONAL JUSTIFICATION FOR ANY QUESTIONS OF A SENSITIVE NATURE, SUCH AS SEXUAL BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES, RELIGIOUS BELIEFS, AND OTHER MATTERS THAT SHOULD INCLUDE THE REASONS WHY THE AGENCY CONSIDERS THE QUESTIONS NECESSARY, THE SPECIFIC USES TO BE MADE OF THE INFORMATION, THE EXPLANATION TO BE GIVEN TO PERSONS FROM WHOM THE INFORMATION IS REQUESTED, AND ANY STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO OBTAIN THEIR CONSENT.

Questions of a sensitive nature are not found in this information collection.

12. PROVIDE ESTIMATES OF THE HOUR BURDEN OF THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION.

THE STATEMENT SHOULD:

- **INDICATE THE NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS, FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE, ANNUAL HOUR BURDEN, AND AN EXPLANATION OF HOW THE BURDEN WAS ESTIMATED. UNLESS DIRECTED TO DO SO, AGENCIES SHOULD NOT CONDUCT SPECIAL SURVEYS TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON WHICH TO BASE HOUR BURDEN ESTIMATES. CONSULTATION WITH A SAMPLE (FEWER THAN 10) OF POTENTIAL RESPONDENTS IS DESIRABLE. IF THE HOUR BURDEN ON RESPONDENTS IS EXPECTED TO VARY WIDELY BECAUSE OF DIFFERENCE IN ACTIVITY, SIZE, OR COMPLEXITY, SHOW THE RANGE OF ESTIMATED HOUR BURDEN, AND EXPLAIN THE REASONS FOR THE VARIANCE. GENERALLY, ESTIMATES SHOULD NOT INCLUDE BURDEN HOURS FOR CUSTOMARY AND USUAL BUSINESS PRACTICES.**

This collection has 12 cooperative agreement recipients. Each cooperative agreement recipient will have 14 responses total up to 169 responses annually. There will be 358 hour total annual burden for reporting and recordkeeping. Of the 358 hours for record keeping and reporting, 204 is for Regional Food Center specific materials and 154 hours are for the forms required for all AMS programs.

The new burden estimate is substantially decreased from the initial submission as this resubmission includes only the required reporting for the 12 cooperative agreement recipients and does not include an application process. The time estimates were calculated based on the standardized requirements that are either read or submitted for all MS cooperative agreement Programs (RFA, SF-424, AMS 33, Terms and Conditions,

amendments, and reporting), and the experiences and input of cooperators in completing required reporting. The complete public reporting burden is summarized on AMS-71.

- **IF THIS REQUEST FOR APPROVAL COVERS MORE THAN ONE FORM, PROVIDE SEPARATE HOUR BURDEN ESTIMATES FOR EACH FORM AND AGGREGATE THE HOUR BURDENS IN ITEM 13 OF OMB FORM 83-I.**

The complete public reporting burden is summarized on the AMS-71.

- **PROVIDE ESTIMATES OF ANNUALIZED COST TO RESPONDENTS FOR THE HOUR BURDENS FOR COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION, IDENTIFYING AND USING APPROPRIATE WAGE RATE CATEGORIES.**

The respondents estimated annual cost in providing information to the Regional Food Business Center Program is \$19,049.18.

This total has been estimated by multiplying 358 total burden hours by \$53.21, the national estimate for the average hourly wage for administrative management consulting services (NAICS code 541611, <https://www.naics.com/naics-code-description/?code=541611>). Data for computation of this hourly wage were obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics, for March 2025(<https://www.bls.gov/web/empstat/ceseeb3a.htm>).

13. PROVIDE AN ESTIMATE OF THE TOTAL ANNUAL COST BURDEN TO RESPONDENTS OR RECORDKEEPERS RESULTING FROM THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION. (DO NOT INCLUDE THE COST OF ANY HOUR BURDEN SHOWN IN ITEMS 12 AND 14).

- **THE COST ESTIMATE SHOULD BE SPLIT INTO TWO COMPONENTS: (a) A TOTAL CAPITAL AND START-UP-COST COMPONENT (ANNUALIZED OVER ITS EXPECTED USEFUL LIFE); AND (b) A TOTAL OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE AND PURCHASE OF SERVICES COMPONENT. THE ESTIMATES SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH GENERATING, MAINTAINING AND DISCLOSING OR PROVIDING THE INFORMATION. INCLUDE DESCRIPTIONS OF METHODS USED TO ESTIMATE MAJOR COST FACTORS INCLUDING SYSTEM AND TECHNOLOGY ACQUISITION, EXPECTED USEFUL LIFE OF CAPITAL EQUIPMENT, THE DISCOUNT RATE(S), AND THE TIME PERIOD OVER WHICH COSTS WILL BE INCURRED. CAPITAL AND START-UP COSTS INCLUDE, AMONG OTHER ITEMS, PREPARATIONS FOR COLLECTING INFORMATION SUCH AS PURCHASING COMPUTERS AND SOFTWARE, MONITORING, SAMPLING, DRILLING AND TESTING EQUIPMENT; AND RECORD STORAGE FACILITIES.**

- IF COST ESTIMATES ARE EXPECTED TO VARY WIDELY, AGENCIES SHOULD PRESENT RANGES OF COST BURDENS AND EXPLAIN THE REASONS FOR THE VARIANCE. THE COST OF PURCHASING OR CONTRACTING OUT INFORMATION COLLECTION SERVICES SHOULD BE A PART OF THIS COST BURDEN ESTIMATE. IN DEVELOPING COST BURDEN ESTIMATES, AGENCIES MAY CONSULT WITH A SAMPLE OF RESPONDENTS (FEWER THAN 10), UTILIZE THE 60-DAY PRE-OMB SUBMISSION PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS AND USE EXISTING ECONOMIC OR REGULATORY IMPACT ANALYSIS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RULEMAKING CONTAINING THE INFORMATION COLLECTION, AS APPROPRIATE.
- GENERALLY, ESTIMATES SHOULD NOT INCLUDE PURCHASES OF EQUIPMENT OR SERVICE, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, MADE: (1) PRIOR TO OCTOBER 1, 1995, (2) TO ACHIEVE REGULATORY COMPLIANCE WITH REQUIREMENTS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH THE INFORMATION COLLECTION, (3) FOR REASONS OTHER THAN TO PROVIDE INFORMATION OR KEEPING RECORDS FOR THE GOVERNMENT, OR (4) AS PART OF CUSTOMARY AND USUAL BUSINESS OR PRIVATE PRACTICES.

There are no capital/start-up or ongoing operation/maintenance costs associated with this information collection.

14. PROVIDE ESTIMATES OF ANNUALIZED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. ALSO, PROVIDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE METHOD USED TO ESTIMATE COST, WHICH SHOULD INCLUDE QUANTIFICATION OF HOURS, OPERATION EXPENSES (SUCH AS EQUIPMENT, OVERHEAD, PRINTING, AND SUPPORT STAFF), AND ANY OTHER EXPENSE THAT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN INCURRED WITHOUT THIS COLLECTION OF INFORMATION. AGENCIES ALSO MAY AGGREGATE COST ESTIMATES FROM ITEMS 12, 13, AND 14 IN A SINGLE TABLE.

Estimated Annual Cost to Federal Government to Operate Regional Food Business Centers

Salaries/Benefits and	\$3,300,000
Compensation/Awards/Overhead	
Total	\$3,300,000

The estimated annual cost currently to operate the Regional Food Business Center Program is \$4,500,000 per year for all federal employees and contracts, overhead, and other administrative costs.

The Regional Food Business Center Program includes two GS-14, Step 5 Branch Chiefs. One branch focuses on AMS's presence in the field and will manage the cooperative agreements. This branch consists of 12 GS-12, Step 5 field-based staff, three GS-13, Step 5 Team Leads and one GS-12, Step 5 Management and Program Analyst.

The second branch is focused on outreach and technical assistance. This team includes four GS-12, Step 5 Agricultural Marketing Specialists and four GS-13, Step 5 Agricultural Marketing Specialists who coordinate across the Regional Centers and support general technical assistance and oversight. This branch includes a Data Scientist (GS-13, Step 5) focused on evaluation.

Program oversight and policy management is provided by one GS-15, Step 5 Division Director and one GS-14, Step 5 Deputy Director on a part time basis. The GS-15 and one GS-14 staff, in addition to the Management and Program Analyst, are in the Washington, DC locality and all other staff are classified under "Rest of the United States," as per the OPM General Schedule.

15. EXPLAIN THE REASON FOR ANY PROGRAM CHANGES OR ADJUSTMENTS REPORTED IN ITEMS 13 OR 14 OF THE OMB FORM 83-I.

Total burden has decreased because collection does not include initial application materials. The current request for renewal includes only the required semi-annual programmatic and financial reporting for the 12 selected cooperators.

16. FOR COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION WHOSE RESULTS WILL BE PUBLISHED, OUTLINE PLANS FOR TABULATION, AND PUBLICATION. ADDRESS ANY COMPLEX ANALYTICAL TECHNIQUES THAT WILL BE USED. PROVIDE THE TIME SCHEDULE FOR THE ENTIRE PROJECT, INCLUDING BEGINNING AND ENDING DATES OF THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION COMPLETION OF REPORT, PUBLICATION DATES, AND OTHER ACTIONS.

Awardees and public facing program reports are available at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/local-regional/rfbcp>.

The team uses standard quantitative methods to analyze data from the semi-annual performance reports. Principal analysis methods include descriptive, including simple tabulations, as well as cross-tabulations and hypothesis testing by subgroup where appropriate. Qualitative data from the reports will be analyzed manually and with analytic software (if available). Responses are coded for emerging themes and inform the development of a codebook to inform ongoing analysis.

AMS plans to share a summary highlights report on an annual basis. The current report is available here: [RFBC All Center Key Highlights Brief](#). A more comprehensive report on the evaluation will be available approximately 3 years after award and again at the conclusion of

the agreements. The publicly available report shares outcomes achieved by the Regional Food Business Centers, such as the number of businesses supported, the value of investments leveraged, and relationships developed. In addition, AMS plans to highlight success stories on its website and via social media throughout the lifespan of the agreements to showcase the variety of work the Regional Food Business Centers will conduct.

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.

Each form currently contains an OMB number and an expiration date.

18. EXPLAIN EACH EXCEPTION TO THE CERTIFICATION STATEMENT IDENTIFIED IN ITEM 19, “CERTIFICATION FOR PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT SUBMISSIONS,” OF OMB FORM 83-I.

The agency is able to certify compliance with all provisions under Item 19 of OMB Form 83-I.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS.

This information collection does not employ statistical methods.