

**Department of Transportation
Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration
Office of Pipeline Safety**

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

**Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Grant Program
OMB Control No. 2137-0641**

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INTRODUCTION

The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) requests approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for an extension of a currently approved collection entitled “Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Grant Program” under OMB Control No. 2137-0641. The current expiration date for this information collection is January 31, 2026.

Part A. Justification

1. Circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (H.R. 3684, Public Law 117 - 58) is the most significant investment in our nation’s infrastructure in more than half a century. This includes the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration’s (PHMSA) first ever infrastructure grant program. Subject to funding availability, the legislation designated \$200 million a year in grant funding with a total of \$1 billion in grant funding over the next five years.

This grant funding is intended to reduce potential incidents and fatalities and to avoid the economic losses that can result from an incident occurring. Additionally, this will also assist in the reduction of lost or leaking gas by replacing existing pipe that is more prone to fugitive emissions of natural gas.

The Act sets forth that the Secretary of Transportation shall establish procedures for awarding grants that take into consideration the following: (1) the risk profile of the existing pipeline system operated by the applicant, including the presence of pipe prone to leakage; (2) the potential of the project for creating jobs; (3) the potential for benefiting disadvantaged rural and urban communities; and (4) economic impact or growth. This information collection is necessary to meet the Act’s requirements stipulated above. In order to award the grant money, DOT/PHMSA must request solicitations from the municipalities and community owned utility systems for review against set criteria for consideration as laid out in H. R. 3684—1015.

2. How, by whom, and for what purpose is the information to be used.

Information will be collected by PHMSA beginning with PHMSA’s Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), posted on Grants.gov. Prospective applicants will apply for grant funding consideration and the information collected will be used to evaluate and award grant funding. After grants are awarded, PHMSA will collect information as required by the NOFO and Federal Grants process and, if needed, additional information to monitor use of grant funding and track grantee progress.

3. Extent of automated information collection.

Grant applicants must submit the required Federal grant application forms and narrative statements in electronic form through www.grants.gov.

PHMSA is currently reviewing and assessing existing grant management and reporting systems with the goal of streamlining the reporting requirements within the statute to reduce the reporting burden of prospective and awarded grantees and determining the most efficient and effective way to submit that information to include grants.gov, web portal, e-mails, or some other electronic means.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication.

PHMSA does not foresee any duplication of efforts caused by our information collection.

5. Efforts to minimize the burden on small businesses.

This information collection applies only to municipalities and community-owned utility companies. PHMSA does not expect this information collection to adversely impact small businesses or other small entities.

6. Impact of less frequent collection of information.

If this information was collected less frequently, the disbursement of federal funds to municipalities and community-owned utilities would be adversely impacted. Information used to evaluate potential grantees would not be timely or accurate, possibly resulting in an inequitable distribution of funds.

7. Special Circumstances.

PHMSA intends for this information collection to be conducted in a manner consistent with the guidelines in 5 CFR 1320.5(d)(2).

8. Compliance with 5 CFR 1320.8(d).

PHMSA published notice and request for comments on this information collection request in the Federal Register (90 FR 31748) on July 15, 2025. PHMSA did not receive any comments pertaining to the renewal of this information collection.

9. Payment or gifts to respondents.

There is no payment or gift provided to respondents associated with this collection of

information.

10. Assurance of confidentiality.

PHMSA does not have the authority to grant confidentiality.

11. Justification for collection of sensitive information.

The agency collects information of a sensitive nature as needed for the completion of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. Sensitive information includes the locations of pipelines in the form of written descriptions, GPS coordinates, maps, and photographs. This information is redacted from environmental assessments and categorical exclusions prior to their publication.

12. Estimate of burden hours for information requested.

Estimated Annual Burden: 1,540 responses and 39,840 burden hours.

PHMSA expects the requested information to be collected once per applicant for each NOFO. PHMSA expects to receive approximately 200 applications from potential grantees annually over the next four years. PHMSA estimates that it will take each applicant approximately 160 hours to compile and submit the forms required to complete the application. For an estimated 200 applications, the amount of the annual burden is 32,000 hours.

PHMSA estimates that there will be 160 total grant recipients. Each recipient will submit a progress report and a financial report every quarter (i.e., two reports per quarter). PHMSA estimates each recipient will spend five hours per report. PHMSA estimates every recipient will spend a total of 10 hours per quarter to complete both the progress and financial reports. Each recipient will spend a total of 40 hours annually. For the estimated 160 grant recipients, the amount of the annual burden is 6,400 hours. PHMSA estimates collecting eight reports per year from 160 grant recipients, for a total of 1,280 reports per year.

PHMSA estimates there will be approximately 60 grants recipients completing an environmental assessment annually. Each recipient will spend a total of 24 hours completing the environmental assessment. For the estimated 60 grant recipients completing an environmental assessment, the amount of the annual burden is 1,440 hours. PHMSA estimates collecting one environmental assessment from 60 grant recipients, for a total of 60 environmental assessments per year.

Therefore, PHMSA estimates that there will be a total of 1,540 responses (200 applications plus 1,280 post-award reports plus 60 environmental assessments) for an aggregate total annual burden for the information collection of 39,840 hours (32,000 hours for applications plus 6,400 hours for post-award reports plus 1,440 hours for environmental assessments). Actual hours will vary depending on the proposed scope of the applicant's program, the applicant's geographic

service area, and the number of affiliate organizations.

The burden estimates below accounts for the total amount of effort involved.

Information Collection	Number of Responses	Burden Hours Per Respondent	Total Annual Burden Hours
Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Grant Application	200	160	32,000
Environmental Assessment	60	24	1,440
Post-Grant Reporting Quarterly/Closeout Reporting	1,280	5	6,400
Total	1,540 responses		39,840 total burden hours

13. Estimate of the total annual costs burden to Grant Applicants.

PHMSA expects the grant applications to be completed in the course of an employee's regular duties. Because prospective applicants range in size, staff, and resources, it's difficult to estimate a cost, other than time, across the applicant pool. PHMSA expects most of the entities applying for this grant to be smaller businesses who can't afford to hire technical engineers or design firms to complete the application. PHMSA assumes that the applications will be completed by in-house staff across various salary levels. For this reason, PHMSA estimates no additional costs to the respondents other than the time burden estimated in Question 12 above.

14. Estimates of costs to the Federal Government.

Based on PHMSA's best projections using examples of other NOFO's published by PHMSA, the estimated cost to the federal government to review and rate applications and select grantees is \$345,000 on an annual basis. This estimate is based on experience with prior NOFO application cycles. On average, PHMSA receives 200 applications per year. PHMSA estimates that it will spend approximately 23 hours, per application, reviewing and rating each application. At a rate of approximately \$75 per hour, including fringe benefits, PHMSA expects that this information collection will cost the federal government \$345,000 annually.

The hourly cost reflects the rate of PHMSA staff, including fringe benefits, who are assigned to perform each of the required actions listed in the chart below. The hourly cost is based on PHMSA's experience under previous application review cycles of this grant program.

Required Action	Frequency of Action	Hours per Action	Number of Respondents	Number of PHMSA Staff Hours	Average GS Hourly Rate	Annual Cost
Eligibility Review	1.00	5.00	200.00	1,000	\$75.00	\$75,000.00
Technical Review & Rating Application	2.00	7.00	200.00	2,800	\$75.00	\$210,000.00
Grantee Selection	1.00	4.00	200.00	800	\$75.00	\$60,000.00
Total						\$345,000.00

15. Explanation of the program change or adjustments.

The burden of this information collection has been adjusted to reflect actual grant application submissions received over the past three years since our initial burden estimate. No additional no program changes or adjustments are included in this request.

16. Publication of results of data collection.

Annual grant awards will be publicly announced.

17. Approval for not displaying the expiration date of OMB approval.

PHMSA is not seeking approval to not display the expiration date.

18. Exceptions to the certification statement.

There is no exception to PHMSA's certification of this request for information collection approval.