

SUPPORTING STATEMENT - PART A for

OMB Control Number 0578-0031

Advancing Markets for Producers Grants

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**United States Department of Agriculture
National Resource Conservation Program (NRCS)
Supporting Statement
Advancing Markets for Producers Grants
OMB Control Number: 0578-0031**

NRCS is requesting a reinstatement with change of a previously approved collection associated with the Advancing Markets for Producers grants.

1. Circumstances that make the collection of information necessary.

Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

USDA has directed the Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) mission area and NRCS to implement the Advancing Markets for Producers initiative to prioritize producer support to develop sustained methods for expansion of markets for American agricultural products; prioritizing new markets, improving supply chains, and enabling direct-to consumer sales, thereby improving economic opportunities for farmers; and prioritize methods to improve farmers collective resource sharing, access to market infrastructure, and promotion of long-term economic sustainability within the amplification of market expansion. The Advancing Markets for Producers initiative is using the funds and authorities of the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) (15 U.S.C. 714-714f). This funding opportunity leverages the authorities under Section 5 of the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act at 15 U.S.C. 714c with particular emphasis on the following subsection:

“(e) increase the domestic consumption of agricultural commodities (other than tobacco) by expanding or aiding in the expansion of domestic markets or by developing or aiding in the development of new and additional markets, marketing facilities, and uses for such commodities.”

2. Purpose and Use of the Information. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate how the agency has actually used the information received from the current collection.

The affected public is Business or other for profits; Academic institutions; Not-for-profit institutions; and State, local, and Tribal governments. NRCS uses the information to report on the progress related to the funding opportunity requirements. Lack of adequate information to make the determination could result in the improper administration and appropriation of Federal grant funds.

The information collection requirements are described below and on the attached Reporting and Recordkeeping Requirements.

Progress Reports

Progress reports will be required two times per year, including the following components:

- Producers and landowners participating;
- Conservation practices applied;
- Training provided by project partners;
- Financial assistance for producers or landowners to implement conservation practices;
- Marketing activities conducted by projects to differentiate commodities;
- Technical assistance and resources provided, especially to help producers overcome barriers to adopting conservation practices;
- Partnerships developed and leveraged including public-private partnerships to foster and develop commodity markets;
- Commodity supply chain and demand impacts as well as other economic benefits.
- Options and approaches for providing technical assistance to participating farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners;
- Collection of farm level data and procedures for estimating benefits associated with project activities; and
- Synthesis of outcomes and successes;

These progress reports also include collection of the following information:

- Lessons-learned as projects are implemented;
- Approaches and options for tracing commodities through the supply chain;
- Mechanisms for reducing costs of implementation;
- Opportunities for USDA and others to inform future approaches to generating new and expanded markets for differentiated commodities; and
- Evaluation of tools used in estimating benefits associated with on-farm and on-forest practices.

Notes: Certain reporting elements may be required to be georeferenced. Financial reporting will also be required consistent with 2 CFR 200. Spot checks may be required upon review of reporting documents or other USDA analyses.

Collections Approved under Other OMB Control Numbers: The following table summarizes the information collection for which approval has been obtained under the OMB Control Number.

Description	Approved Under
SF-425, Financial Status Report	4040-0014, Exp. 06/30/2028
SF-270, Request for Advance and Reimbursement	4040-0012, 06/30/2028
AD-1026, Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification	EXEMPT
CPA-52, Environmental Evaluation Worksheet	

3. Use of information technology and burden reduction. 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, for example, permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis of the decisions for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of information technology to reduce burden.

NRCS makes every effort to comply with the E-Government Act, 2002 (E-Gov) and to provide for alternative submission of information collections. The Advancing Markets for Producers initiative uses forms that are available on Grants.gov.

Non-form information collection is mostly limited to copies of documents in the Advancing Markets for Producers grant activities' possession or providing written replies to agency requests or offers. Non-form collections, as well as all forms, may be submitted by email. Other forms of electronic or automated information collection may be used in the future.

4. Efforts to identify duplication. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purpose described in item 2 above.

Every effort has been made to avoid duplication. There is similar data collected, however, those do not meet the agency's need. NRCS solely manages issuance for the Advancing Markets for Producers grant program to ensure integrity. There is no duplication of information involved with monitoring of the Advancing Markets for Producers grant itself. Advancing Markets for Producers grant recipients provide information on a regular basis to the agency to ensure that the program is still eligible to receive federal funds.

5. Impacts on small businesses or other small entities. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden. There is no significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities since it contains normal business recordkeeping requirements and minimal essential reporting requirements. We estimate approximately 50 small entities.

6. Consequences of collecting the information less frequently. Describe the consequences to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

This collection is mandatory and is a one-time data collection. The activity requires the minimum information needed to determine whether an Advancing Markets for Producer grant recipient is eligible to continue receiving Federal Assistance and reporting. This minimum reporting of information is necessary for NRCS to administer the Advancing Markets for Producers initiative in an equitable and cost-effective manner.

If the information is not collected, NRCS will not be able to effectively manage the grant awards.

7. Special circumstances relating to the Guidelines of 5 CFR 1320.5. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- a) Requiring respondents to report information more frequently than quarterly. There are no information collection requirements that require information more frequently than quarterly.
- b) Requiring written responses in less than 30 days. There are no information collection requirements that require written responses in less than 30 days.
- c) Requiring more than an original and two copies. There are no information collection requirements that require more than an original or single copy of a document.
- d) Requiring respondents to retain records for more than 3 years. There are no such requirements.
- e) No utilizing statistical sampling. There are no such requirements.
- f) Requiring the use of statistical sampling which has not been reviewed and approved by OMB. There are no such requirements.
- g) Requiring the pledge of confidentiality. There are no such requirements.
- h) Requiring submission of propriety trade secrets. There are no such requirements.

8. Comments to the Federal Register Notice and efforts for consultation. 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.

Describe efforts to consult with persons outside the Agency to obtain their view on availability of data, frequency of collection, the clarity of instructions and record keeping, disclosure, or reporting format (if any), and on data elements to be recorded, disclosed, or reported.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every three 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.

The original 60-day notice requesting public comment was published on February 10, 2026 at 91 FR 5884. We received 5 comments via Regulations.gov. One commenter generally agreed with the reporting summary and noted that reporting templates and opportunities for digital submission of reports can reduce reporting burden. Three commenters stated that clearly distinguishing required versus optional data elements, consolidating repetitive reporting requirements, and aligning reporting expectations with the current structure of Advancing Markets for Producers would improve efficiency and reduce burden. A final commenter requested USDA remove requirements for any reporting related to marketing activities under the project.

USDA appreciates the submissions. The agency has incorporated the commenters' suggestions regarding updates to detailed progress reporting requirements for Advancing Markets for Producers. These updates clearly delineate optional reporting elements; reduce the number of reported elements to those items most critical to the revamped program; and remove repetitive and duplicate reporting elements. With regard to the final comment, the authority of this funding opportunity specifically focuses on expanding existing and developing new commodity markets, as is reinforced in the updated title for this work - "Advancing Markets for Producers". The notice of funding opportunity stated that semi-annual progress reports would be required to include information on "marketing and outreach related to commodities as a result of project activities." Therefore, USDA has maintained the reporting elements essential to these activities.

We have consulted with three individuals who had no comments and did not want to share their name with the public.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

There is no payment or gift given to respondents.

10. Assurances of confidentiality provided to respondents. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to the respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or Agency policy.

Assurance of Confidentiality is provided for the information collected under the NRCS Advancing Markets for Producers Program(AMP). The information collected is protected from disclosure under Section 1619 of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, as amended (7 U.S.C. § 8791). Personal Identifiable Information (PII) collected under AMP is protected under the Privacy Act of 1975 (5 U.S.C. § 552a), 7 CFR Part 1, Subpart G, and USDA/NRCS-1.

This package was reviewed and approved by FPAC Assistant Privacy Officer, Samantha Jones, on February 11, 2026.

11. Justification for any questions of a sensitive nature. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification 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.

The information collected does not include questions of a sensitive nature as defined by OMB guidance. Information collected relates to participation in the AMP program and associated business, financial, ownership, conservation, and grant administration activities. Any PII collected is limited to what is necessary for program purpose and is protected under the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. § 552a) and 1619 of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, as amended (7 U.S.C. § 8791).

12. Estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated.

A. Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. 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 estimate of hour burden of the information collection as provided in the Reporting and Recordkeeping Requirements spreadsheet, is as follows:

Total number of Unduplicated Respondents	125.
Business or other for-profits: 40	
Not-for-profit institutions: 49	
State, Local or Tribal governments: 36	
Reports Filed Per Respondent	2.
Total Annual Responses	250.
Total Annual Burden Hours	4,250.

B. Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories.

The estimated respondent cost is \$239,148 (4,250 x \$56.27).

Respondent cost per hour was derived by using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2023, 11-9013 Farmers, Ranchers, and Other Agricultural Managers. The mean hourly wage rate, as measured by the Bureau of Labor, is \$43.35. Fringe benefits for all private industry workers are an additional 29.8 percent, or \$12.92, resulting in a total of \$56.27 per hour.

13. Estimates of other total annual cost burden. Provide estimates 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 questions 12 and 14). The cost estimates 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 information collection places no burden costs on respondents for capital, start-up, operation, maintenance, or the purchase of services.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Provide a description of the method used to

estimate cost and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

The total annualized cost to the Federal Government is \$200,156 (\$64.05 x 25 hours x 125 responses).

Agency employees provide guidance and assistance to the Advancing Markets for Producers initiative in obtaining and reporting the information needed. In addition, they provide templates for completion to ensure information provided is complete and accurate, and to reduce the time it takes Advancing Markets for Producers grant recipients to gather and submit the requested information. Also, employees review the information provided to effectively administer federal grant funds according to applicable rates and regulations for the general administration of federal grants. It is an estimate that employees spend 25 hours on information submitted from each grant.

USDA employee cost per response is equal 25 hours multiplied by \$48.89 (estimated National employee average hourly wage; based 2025 General Schedule, Grade 13, Step 5). Fringe benefits for all government workers are an additional 31 percent, or \$15.16 resulting in a total of \$64.05 per hour.

15. Explain the reason for any program changes or adjustments reported in Items 13 or 14 of the OMB Form 83-I.

The current burden inventory is 500 estimated annual respondents, 1,610 estimated annual responses and 14,370 estimated annual burden hours. With this reinstatement the agency is seeking 125 estimated annual respondents, 250 estimated annual responses and 4,250 estimated annual burden hours. This reflects a decrease of 375 estimated respondents, a decrease of 1,360 responses, and a decrease of 10,120 estimated burden hours.

These changes are the result of program changes. This reflects the transition of the funding opportunity from the application period to implementation of the grant agreements, where the total number of respondents is known and limited. No future awards to new recipients are anticipated under this funding opportunity and the reporting and recordkeeping burden is limited to ongoing reports on performance and financial status to monitor progress of the grant awards.

16. Plans for tabulation, and publication and project time schedule. For collection of information whose results will be published, outline plans for the tabulation and publication.

The information collections under this OMB control number may be tabulated or published in an aggregated manner as part of reporting on accomplishments under this grant opportunity.

17. Displaying the OMB Approval Expiration Date. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for the OMB approval of information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

The information collected is either in narrative in the submitter's own format - where specific forms are not required, so there is no place to include the OMB control number and expiration date – or on common forms.

The common forms that are part of this information collection are available on grants.gov and display the OMB control number and expiration date, as required on instruments used by multiple agencies that each obtains its own OMB approval in the Grants.gov.

18. Exceptions to the certification statement identified. Explain each exception statement to the certification statement identified in items 19 and 20 on OMB Reporting and Recordkeeping Requirements. There are no exceptions requested.