

U.S. Small Business Administration
2026 Critical Suppliers Prize Competition
OMB Control Number to be Assigned
Justification – Part A Supporting Statement

Overview of Information Collection:

SBA is requesting emergency approval of an information collection for SBA’s 2026 Critical Suppliers Prize Competition. Although SBA believes this collection falls under 5 CFR 1320.3(h)(4), SBA requests emergency approval of this vital collection of information out of an abundance of caution to comply with the Paperwork Reduction Act.

1. Need & Method for the Information Collection

The 2026 Critical Suppliers Prize Competition (the “Competition”) will directly fund U.S.-based small businesses to provide non-dilutive capital towards restoring U.S. industrial supply chains. These funds would be used to refine, accelerate, and scale existing solutions (rather than drive research and development) and would be provided in the form of non-dilutive prize funding.

The Competition is authorized under the America COMPETES Act (15 U.S.C. 3719) and through its award aims to stimulate innovation within the U.S. industrial base. Small businesses comprise 98% of all manufacturing in the United States and account for approximately half of our GDP. A significant portion of the U.S. manufacturing base was offshored in the last several decades. This Administration is bringing back this base and strengthening our critical supply chains; however, we cannot simply reshore dated manufacturing production processes and technologies. In restoring our manufacturing base, we must also spur the development of solutions that will drive efficiencies and scale at a rate to effectively compete with our nation’s adversaries.

The Competition aims to provide targeted and mission aligned awards that will bring innovation to our manufacturing base and rapidly expand production capacity in areas identified as critical supply chain chokepoints with the overall objective to deliver measurable, near-term improvements by directing resources toward:

- Established suppliers with the ability to scale;
- High-impact supply chain gaps or chokepoints; and
- Actions that achieve defined milestones and/or produce tangible output within a defined timeframe.

Awards will be made to small businesses based on a detailed review of each submission for factors including a demonstrated operating history, proven technical capability, relevance to identified supply chain gaps and chokepoints, creditworthiness, and the ability to achieve measurable outcomes.

2. Use of the Information

SBA will use the submissions to determine the winners of the 2026 Critical Suppliers Prize Competition. Additional information on the selection of winners is provided in the Competition

Guidelines.

3. Use of Information Technology

Submissions are being collected through email. As a result, all submissions will be collected electronically.

4. Non-duplication

Each respondent will only provide one submission to SBA to enter the Critical Suppliers Prize Competition. As information is specific to this prize competition, it is not available to SBA through other means.

5. Burden on Small Business

All respondents are anticipated to be small businesses. SBA has narrowly tailored the collection to request only the minimum information necessary for administering the prize competition.

6. Less Frequent Collection

This is a one-time collection. As a result, it cannot be collected less frequently. If SBA does not collect this information, SBA will be unable to properly award congressionally appropriated entrepreneurial development funding.

7. Paperwork Reduction Act Guidelines

No special circumstances exist.

8. Consultation and Public Comments

This new collection is being submitted for review in accordance with emergency procedures (5 CFR 1320.13). As such, advanced public notice and comment has not been conducted on the current collection.

9. Gifts or Payment

No gift or payment will be made to respondents beyond the prize awards made to the winners of the Competition.

10. Privacy & Confidentiality

In the event respondents submit confidential commercial or financial information, the respondent should clearly and conspicuously mark each page, field, or data element it believes is confidential commercial or financial information and to which such designation applies. Unmarked information may be treated by the Agency as information that the participant does not consider confidential.

Requests received by SBA under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552, shall be reviewed by the Agency in accordance with the statute and the regulations set forth at 13 C.F.R. 102.1 et. seq. The information collection is not indexed and retrieved by the agency or on behalf of the agency, therefore a System of Records does not exist.

11. Sensitive Questions

Information submitted by a respondent containing Personally Identifiable Information (PII) or collected by SBA in conducting reference checks for respondents or personal character references regarding any respondent's management team shall be treated by SBA in accordance with the Privacy Act, 5 U.S.C. 552a, and the Regulations found at 13 C.F.R. 102.20 et. seq.

12. Burden Estimate

SBA anticipates approximately 250 respondents will submit an entry to the Critical Suppliers Prize Competition. SBA used the 2025 Bureau of Labor Statistics mean hourly wage of \$45.78 for Business and Financial Operations Occupations to estimate the cost per response.

Burden per Response:			
	Time Per Response	Hours Per Response	Cost Per Response
Reporting	180 minutes	3 hours	\$137.34
Record Keeping	0	0	0
Third Party Disclosure	0	0	0
Total	180 minutes	3 hours	\$137.34

Annual Burden:

	Annual Number of Responses	Annual Time Burden (Hours)	Annual Cost Burden (Dollars)
Reporting	250	750	\$34,335
Record Keeping	0	0	0
Third Party Disclosure	0	0	0
Total	250	750	\$34,335

13. Estimated nonrecurring costs

There are no non-labor costs associated with this collection.

14. Estimated cost to the Government

SBA anticipates awarding up to \$20,000,000 in prize awards.

15. Reasons for changes

This is a new collection.

16. Publicizing Results

SBA does not plan to publicize respondents' individual submissions. However, SBA does plan to publicize the results of the Competition and may include non-sensitive information obtained from the submissions, including a description of respondents' businesses and how they

contribute to the industrial base.

17. OMB Not to Display Approval

Not applicable. SBA will display the expiration date.

18. Exceptions to "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Submissions"

There are no exceptions to the certification statement.