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Dated: November 14, 2006.

Jackie J. Gleason,

Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Inviting Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program Preapplications for Technical Assistance for Rural Transportation Systems

AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS), an Agency within the Rural Development mission area, announces the availability of two individual grants: One single \$495,000 grant from the passenger transportation funds appropriated for the Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) program and another single \$250,000 grant for Federally Recognized Native American Tribes' (FRNAT) from funds appropriated for the RBEG program. RBS will administer these awards under the RBEG program and 7 U.S.C. 1932(c)(2) for fiscal year (FY) 2007. Historically, Congress has allotted earmark funding for these specific programs. This notice is being issued prior to passage of a final appropriations bill, which may or may not provide an appropriation for these programs, to allow applicants sufficient time to leverage financing, submit applications, and give the Agency time to process applications within the current fiscal year. Each grant is to be competitively awarded to a qualified national organization. These grants are to provide technical assistance for rural transportation and rural transportation to FRNAT's. This notice will be amended should funding in excess of projected levels be received.

DATES: The deadline for receipt of preapplications in the Rural Development State Office is January 31, 2007. Applications received at a Rural Development State Office after that date

will not be considered for FY 2007 funding.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Cindy Mason, Loan Specialist, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA, STOP 3225, Room 6866, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250-3225. Telephone: (202) 690-1433, FAX: (202) 720-2213.

ADDRESSES: For additional information, entities wishing to apply for assistance should contact a Rural Development State Office to obtain copies of the application package. A list of Rural Development State Offices follows:

District of Columbia

Rural Development Business Programs, USDA, Specialty Lenders Division, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., STOP 3225, Room 6867, Washington, DC 20250-3225, (202) 720-1400

Alabama

USDA Rural Development State Office, Sterling Centre, Suite 601, 4121 Carmichael Road, Montgomery, AL 36106-3683, (334) 279-3400/TDD (334) 279-3495

Alaska

USDA Rural Development State Office, 800 West Evergreen, Suite 201, Palmer, AK 99645-6539, (907) 761-7705/TDD (907) 761-8905

Arizona

USDA Rural Development State Office, 230 N. 1st Ave., Suite 206, Phoenix, AZ 85003, (602) 280-8701/TDD (602) 280-8705

Arkansas

USDA Rural Development State Office, 700 West Capitol Avenue, Room 3416, Little Rock, AR 72201-3225, (501) 301-3200/TDD (501) 301-3279

California

USDA Rural Development State Office, 430 G Street, # 4169, Davis, CA 95616-4169, (530) 792-5800/TDD (530) 792-5848

Colorado

USDA Rural Development State Office, 655 Parfet Street, Room E100, Lakewood, CO 80215, (720) 544-2903/TDD (720) 544-2976

Delaware-Maryland

USDA Rural Development State Office, 1221 College Park Drive, Suite 200, Dover, DE 19904, (302) 857-3580/TDD (302) 857-3585

Florida/Virgin Islands

USDA Rural Development State Office, 4440 NW 25th Place, P.O. Box 147010, Gainesville, FL 32614-7010, (352) 338-3400/TDD (352) 338-3499

Georgia

USDA Rural Development State Office, Stephens Federal Building, 355 E. Hancock Avenue, Athens, GA 30601-2768, (706) 546-2162/TDD (706) 546-2034

Hawaii

USDA Rural Development State Office, Federal Building, Room 311, 154 Waiuanue Avenue, Hilo, HI 96720, (808) 933-8380/TDD (808) 933-8321

Idaho

USDA Rural Development State Office, 9173 West Barnes Dr., Suite A1, Boise, ID 83709, (208) 378-5600/TDD (208) 378-5644

Illinois

USDA Rural Development State Office, 2118 W. Park Court, Suite A, Champaign, IL 61821, (217) 403-6200/TDD (217) 403-6240

Indiana

USDA Rural Development State Office, 5975 Lakeside Boulevard, Indianapolis, IN 46278, (317) 290-3100/TDD (317) 290-3343

Iowa

USDA Rural Development State Office, Federal Building, Room 873, 210 Walnut Street, Des Moines, IA 50309, (515) 284-4663/TDD (515) 284-4858

Kansas

USDA Rural Development State Office, 1303 S.W., First American Place, Suite 100, Topeka, KS 66604-4040, (785) 271-2700/TDD (785) 271-2767

Kentucky

USDA Rural Development State Office, 771 Corporate Drive, Suite 200, Lexington, KY 40503, (859) 224-7300/TDD (859) 224-7422

Louisiana

USDA Rural Development State Office, 3727 Government Street, Alexandria, LA 71302, (318) 473-7921/TDD (318) 473-7655

Maine

USDA Rural Development State Office, 967 Illinois Avenue, Suite 4, P.O. Box 405, Bangor, ME 04402-0405, (207) 990-9160/TDD (207) 942-7331

Massachusetts/Rhode Island/Connecticut

USDA Rural Development State Office, 451 West Street, Suite 2, Amherst, MA 01002-2999, (413) 253-4300/TDD (413) 253-4590

Michigan

USDA Rural Development State Office, 3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 200, East Lansing, MI 48823, (517) 324-5190/TDD (517) 324-5169

Minnesota

USDA Rural Development State Office, 375 Jackson Street, Suite 410, St. Paul, MN 55101-1853, (651) 602-7800/TDD (651) 602-3799

Mississippi

USDA Rural Development State Office, Federal Building, Suite 831, 100 W. Capitol Street, Jackson, MS 39269, (601) 965-4316/TDD (601) 965-5850

Missouri

USDA Rural Development State Office, 601 Business Loop 70 West, Parkade Center,

Suite 235, Columbia, MO 65203, (573) 876-0976/TDD (573) 876-9480

Montana

USDA Rural Development State Office, 900 Technology Boulevard, Suite B, P.O. Box 85, Bozeman, MT 59771, (406) 585-2580/TDD (406) 585-2562

Nebraska

USDA Rural Development State Office, Federal Building, Room 152, 100 Centennial Mall North, Lincoln, NE 68508, (402) 437-5551/TDD (402) 437-5093

Nevada

USDA Rural Development State Office, 1390 South Curry Street, Carson City, NV 89703-5146, (775) 887-1222/TDD (775) 885-0633

New Jersey

USDA Rural Development State Office, 8000 Midlantic Drive, 5th Floor North, Suite 500, Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054, (856) 787-7700/TDD (856) 787-7784

New Mexico

USDA Rural Development State Office, 6200 Jefferson Street, NE, Room 255, Albuquerque, NM 87109, (505) 761-4950/TDD (505) 761-4938

New York

USDA Rural Development State Office, The Galleries of Syracuse, 441 South Salina Street, Suite 357, Syracuse, NY 13202-2541, (315) 477-6400/TDD (315) 477-6447

North Carolina

USDA Rural Development State Office, 4405 Bland Road, Suite 260, Raleigh, NC 27609, (919) 873-2000/TDD (919) 873-2003

North Dakota

USDA Rural Development State Office, Federal Building, Room 208, 220 East Rosser, P.O. Box 1737, Bismarck, ND 58502-1737, (701) 530-2037/TDD (701) 530-2113

Ohio

USDA Rural Development State Office, Federal Building, Room 507, 200 North High Street, Columbus, OH 43215-2418, (614) 255-2400/TDD (614) 255-2554

Oklahoma

USDA Rural Development State Office, 100 USDA, Suite 108, Stillwater, OK 74074-2654, (405) 742-1000/TDD (405) 742-1007

Oregon

USDA Rural Development State Office, 1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Suite 801, Portland, OR 97232, (503) 414-3300/TDD (503) 414-3387

Pennsylvania

USDA Rural Development State Office, One Credit Union Place, Suite 330, Harrisburg, PA 17110-2996, (717) 237-2299/TDD (717) 237-2261

Puerto Rico

USDA Rural Development State Office, IBM Building, Suite 601, 654 Munos Rivera

Avenue, San Juan, PR 00918-6106, (787) 766-5095/TDD (787) 766-5332

South Carolina

USDA Rural Development State Office, Strom Thurmond Federal Building, 1835 Assembly Street, Room 1007, Columbia, SC 29201, (803) 765-5163/TDD (803) 765-5697

South Dakota

USDA Rural Development State Office, Federal Building, Room 210, 200 Fourth Street, SW, Huron, SD 57350, (605) 352-1100/TDD (605) 352-1147

Tennessee

USDA Rural Development State Office, 3322 West End Avenue, Suite 300, Nashville, TN 37203-1084, (615) 783-1300

Texas

USDA Rural Development State Office, Federal Building, Suite 102, 101 South Main, Temple, TX 76501, (254) 742-9700/TDD (254) 742-9712

Utah

USDA Rural Development State Office, Wallace F. Bennett Federal Building, 125 South State Street, Room 4311, Salt Lake City, UT 84147-0350, (801) 524-4320/TDD (801) 524-3309

Vermont/New Hampshire

USDA Rural Development State Office, City Center, 3rd Floor, 89 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602, (802) 828-6000/TDD (802) 223-6365

Virginia

USDA Rural Development State Office, 1606 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 238, Richmond, VA 23229-5014, (804) 287-1550/TDD (804) 287-1753

Washington

USDA Rural Development State Office, 1835 Black Lake Boulevard SW., Suite B, Olympia, WA 98512-5715, (360) 704-7740/TDD (360) 704-7760

West Virginia

USDA Rural Development State Office, Federal Building, 75 High Street, Room 320, Morgantown, WV 26505-7500, (304) 284-4860/TDD (304) 284-4836

Wisconsin

USDA Rural Development State Office, 4949 Kirschling Court, Stevens Point, WI 54481, (715) 345-7600/TDD (715) 345-7614

Wyoming

USDA Rural Development State Office, 100 East B, Federal Building, Room 1005, P.O. Box 11005, Casper, WY 82602-5006, (307) 233-6700/TDD (307) 233-6733

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Grants offered under this Notice are authorized by section 310B(c)(2) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (CONACT) (7 U.S.C. 1932(c)(2)). The RBEG program is administered on behalf of RBS at the State level by the Rural Development

State Offices. The primary objective of the program is to improve the economic conditions of rural areas. Assistance provided to rural areas under this program may include on-site technical assistance to local and regional governments, public transit agencies, and related nonprofit and for-profit organizations in rural areas; the development of training materials; and the provision of necessary training assistance to local officials and agencies in rural areas.

Awards under the RBEG passenger transportation program will be made on a competitive basis using specific selection criteria contained in 7 CFR part 1942, subpart G, and in accordance with section 310B(c)(2) of the CONACT. That subpart also contains the information required to be in the application package. For the FRNAT grant, which must benefit Federally Recognized Native American Tribes, at least 75 percent of the benefits of the project must be received by members of Federally Recognized Native American Tribes. The project that scores the greatest number of points based on the RBEG selection criteria and Administrator's points will be selected for each grant. Applications will be tentatively scored by the State Offices and submitted to the National Office for review, final scoring, and selection.

Applicants must be qualified national nonprofit organizations with experience in providing technical assistance and training to rural communities for the purpose of improving passenger transportation service or facilities. To be considered "national" RBS requires a qualified organization to provide evidence that it operates in multi-State areas. There is not a requirement to use the grant funds in a multi-State area. Under this notice, grants will be made to qualified, private, nonprofit organizations for the provision of technical assistance and training to rural communities for the purpose of improving passenger transportation services or facilities.

Fiscal Year 2007 Preapplications Submission

Each application received in a Rural Development State Office will be reviewed to determine if this application is consistent with the eligible purposes contained in section 310B(c)(2) of the CONACT. Each selection priority criterion outlined in 7 CFR 1942.305(b)(3), must be addressed in the application. Failure to address any of the criteria will result in a zero-point score for that criterion and impact the overall evaluation of the application. Copies of 7 CFR part 1942, subpart G,

will be provided to any interested applicant making a request to a Rural Development State Office listed in this notice. All projects to receive technical assistance through these passenger transportation grant funds are to be identified when the applications are submitted to the Rural Development State Office. Multiple project applications must identify each individual project, indicate the amount of funding requested for each individual project, and address the criteria as stated above for each individual project.

For multiple-project applications, the average of the individual project scores will be the score for that application.

All eligible applications, along with tentative scoring sheets and the Rural Development State Director's recommendation, will be referred to the National Office no later than March 16, 2007, for final scoring and selection for an award.

The National Office will score applications based on the grant selection criteria and weights contained in 7 CFR part 1942, subpart G and will select a grantee subject to the grantee's satisfactory submission of a formal application and related materials in the manner and timeframe established by RBS in accordance with 7 CFR part 1942, subpart G.

Nondiscrimination Statement

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

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Dated: November 14, 2006.

Jackie J. Gleason,
Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Housing Service

Faith-Based and Community Initiatives-Equal Treatment Rule; Notice of Request for Collection of Public Information With the Use of a Survey

AGENCY: Rural Housing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed collection; comments requested.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Rural Development's intention to request clearance for a new information collection to measure Rural Development implementation of and compliance with the Equal Treatment Rule (7 CFR part 16) and Executive Order (EO) 13279 Equal Protection of the Laws for Faith-Based and Community Organizations.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by January 19, 2007 to be assured of consideration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Rhonda Brown, Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Coordinator, Operations and Management, Rural Development, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20250, phone: (202) 692-0298, e-mail: rhonda.brown@wdc.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Title: Rural Development-Voluntary Survey on the Equal Treatment Rule.

Type of Request: New Information Collection.

Abstract: The Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (FBCI) was implemented in the Department of Agriculture by Executive Order (EO) 13280-Responsibilities of the Department of Agriculture and the Agency for International Development with Respect to Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, December 12, 2002. FBCI Reporting and Outreach began in Rural Development in 2004. Now that the programs are in the third year of this Presidential Initiative and to meet the long term goal of improved participant outcomes, it is time to measure customer experience with Rural Development's implementation of the Equal Treatment Rule and establish compliance benchmarks. The 14 Rural Development programs under the FBCI provide insured or guaranteed loans and/or grants to eligible applicants (including non-profit entities) located in rural geographic areas to assist them in providing services to beneficiaries, low-income individuals, and communities. Loan and grant applications and awards

are processed through approximately 900 Field Offices. In accordance with Government

Performance and Results Act (GPRA) and EO 13280, the results of the survey will enable Rural Development to measure the results and overall effectiveness of FBCI outreach and implementation of and compliance with the Equal Treatment Rule and EO Orders 13279 and 13280, as well as implement compliance action plans and measure improvements.

Estimate of Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 5 minutes per response.

Respondents: Program non-profit applicants.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 4,000.

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Number of Responses: 4,000.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 320 hours.

Copies of this information collection can be obtained from Cheryl Thompson, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, Support Services Division at (202) 692-0043.

Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) Whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology. Written comments may be sent to Cheryl Thompson, Regulations and Paperwork Management Branch, Support Services Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, STOP 0742, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-0742. Comments may also be submitted electronically through Regulations.gov. All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.